

WIRE

THE WIRE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

WWW.THEWIRE.CO.UK ISSUE 261 NOVEMBER 2005 £3.80

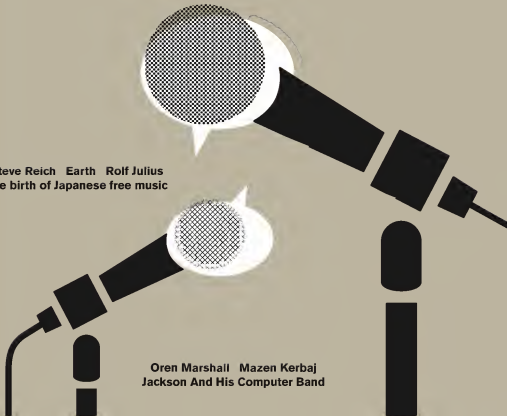


Remake Remodel

60 cover versions that rattle the state of song

Steve Reich Earth Rolf Julius
The birth of Japanese free music

Oren Marshall Mazen Kerbaj
Jackson And His Computer Band



nine | horses

NEW YORK: 2008



nine | horses

by David Sylvestre, Steve Jankel, and Rina Fialman

Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in association with the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Inside



Remake Remodel by James Goggin

Regulars

The Masthead 4

Letters 8

Bitstream 10

Trawling for gossip with *The Wire*'s news net

Global Ear 18

Andy Hamilton follows the ethnomusicological trail to hear authentic Balinese gamelan

Charts 50

Out There 100

The pick of the month's festivals, concerts, club spaces, radio and more; plus *Tip On Squeak*

Subscribe 104

Back Issues 106

Epiphanies 114

David Toop discovers new ways of listening in Korean music and Minoru Miki's koto pieces

Reviews

Index 51

Soundcheck 52

This month's selected records reviewed

Print Run 80

New music books digested

Cross Platform 82

Music and New Media, including Rolf Julius's sound sculpture. Supplement on DVD, Steve Roden + Paul Parhaysen in London, Jonny Trunk's Inner Sleeve and more

On Location 86

Live reviews including the Numusic Festival in Norway, The Emotional Orchestra in the UK and Yamataka Eye and Blind Beast in Japan

Jackson And His Computer Band 12

Warp artist Jackson Fourcade explains the egomaniacal forces behind his deconstructed Techno. By David Stubbs

Mazen Kerbaj 14

The Beirut trumpeter explains to Julian Cowley how his music deals with the legacy of Lebanon's civil war

Oren Marshall 16

The London tuba player extends his instrument's reach with a range of astonishing devices. By Phil England

Invisible Jukebox 20

Steve Reich

The minimalist maestro tussles with tracks by Charlie Parker, Charlemagne Palestine and more. By Mike Barnes

Earth 26

The missing link between La Monte Young and Black Sabbath extend their drone into Country. By Edwin Pouncey

Once Upon A Time In Shinjuku 30

In the second in our new series revisiting significant musical sites, Alan Cummings travels back to Tokyo's sleazebest district in the late 1960s, where Masayuki Takayanagi and Kaoru Abe laid the foundations of Japanese free music

Remake Remodel 38

Often read as a sign of creative bankruptcy, cover versions are also the site of some of music's most radical experiments with existing songforms. In a 12 page special, *The Wire*'s crack writing squad picks 60 cover versions that rattle the state of song. Plus: writer/musician Alan Licht goes undercover to explore his motivations for versioning Moondog, Minutemen, Captain Beefheart and more

The Masthead

There's been much debate round here as to just who (and what) we were looking for to put in our cover versions special. Spirited performance alone wasn't enough to swing an admittance to our club (sorry, PJ Harvey, even though your version of "Is That All There Is?" is splendidly loud), and neither was sheer mischief (ditto Squirrel and The Banshees' less-than-reverent version of "The Lord's Prayer"). What we did look for was music with a kind of longevity, strong enough and pliable enough to be reinvented, reinterpreted and rewritten. No less a person than Steve Reich, who is our guest in this month's Invisible Jubileebox feature, says as much. Reich, whose own music has been enthusiastically taken to the heart (in both senses) of generations of DJs, club remixers and samplers, does it himself. One section of his latest recording, *Variations (No. 9)*, contains quotes from the centuries' old "L'homme Armé." So popular was this secular tune, it was incorporated into music for masses by Dufay, Palestrina and probably several composers as well. A cynic might say that these adaptations were the sign of a pragmatic streak in the church's policy in relation to playlists; but it's probably more accurate to say that clerics and composers alike simply had an ear for a good tune.

Strictly speaking, variations and samplings are probably parts of a thing, whereas a cover is a new entity. All three can be motivated by a desire to pay homage, although the motivations – as Alan Licht notes in his introduction to our main feature – can be myriad. A good cover is not only one that lives in its own right, it's a piece that becomes something else by dint of its new interpretation and the circumstances surrounding its changed environment. To take a bizarre example, you could look at Florence Foster Jenkins's wildly warped interpretations of operatic greats. Bankrolled by a rich husband, she hired various venues – even New York's Carnegie Hall – during the interwar years for a series of concerts unrestrained by any limits to imagination and illuminated with a self-belief of grandiose proportions. Jenkins was so popular that opera critics fought to get tickets; to hear her rendition of "Blossie" by Paviolovitch is to see her dragged across the snowy Russian steppe, loosened dentures chattering in the cold. Small wonder that Paviolovitch's legacy has diminished while Florie's shines on in glorious perpetuity.

The serious point of this is that the continual re-making process so central to the cover version is bound up with the infinite possibilities that its

performance offers. And by performance, I don't mean the formal framing provided by the concert platform, but rather the kind of presentation to the world that has a more diffuse focus. As philosopher Judith Butler has written, the very act of daily performance is bound inextricably to theories of gender, sexuality and politics. Extend this thinking to performers who knowingly perform, and a rich, mutable complexity comes into play. Nick Cave's piano and voice cover of his own song "Sad Waters" – so far available only on his (mostly spoken word CD) *The Secret Life Of The Love Song* – is a world away from the blasting original contained on your Funeral, My Trial. The emotional emphasis has shifted, whatever rage the first version tapped into, the second one is a vision of loss. It's the shadow of the object that has fallen upon the ego, to parson Freud's definition of melancholia.

And lastly, seeing as I'm a cover myself, let's turn to The Wire's temporarily otherwise engaged Deputy Editor, Anne Wille Nestor, and our Editor-at-Large, Rob Young, to whom congratulations are due on the arrival of Axel Enil Neset Young. He is a new release guaranteed to make as much noise as any of the musicians featured in this issue of *The Wire*. **LOUISE GRAY**

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The Wire is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd.
Printed by Wilson & Taylor, London, by SP-DCO to International by the Wire Magazine Ltd.
UK: The Wire (ISSN 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. UK subscription rate of £120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to UK subscribers only. The Wire Magazine (USPS 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. US subscription rate of \$120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to US subscribers only. The Wire Magazine (USPS 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. US subscription rate of \$120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to US subscribers only. The Wire Magazine (USPS 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. US subscription rate of \$120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to US subscribers only.

The Wire is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. Printed by Wilson & Taylor, London, by SP-DCO to International by the Wire Magazine Ltd. UK: The Wire (ISSN 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. UK subscription rate of £120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to UK subscribers only. The Wire Magazine (USPS 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. US subscription rate of \$120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to US subscribers only. The Wire Magazine (USPS 0950-0680) is published 12 times a year by The Wire Magazine Ltd. US subscription rate of \$120 (including postage and a 10% discount on the first year's subscription) is available to US subscribers only.

Subscriptions (see page 104)

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Adventures In Modern Music

Issue 261 November 2005
£3.50
ISSN 0950-0680 (USPS 068231)

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Special thanks this issue Mike Barnes and Yagi Issues

Words Steve Barker, Mike Barnes, Ed Bamber, Clive Bol, Marcus Boon, Ben Borwick, Samantha Brown, Philip Clark, Mike Clarke, Byron Coley, Neil Cooper, Julian Cowley, Christoph Cox, Alan Cummings, Geers Deyl, Brian Duguid, Lena Dzwonkova, Phil England, Kevin Egan, Matt Fyfe, Phil Freeman, Louise Gray, Andy Hamilton, Jim Hayles, Richard Henderson, Ken Hollings, Hui Hui, David Keenan, Rahma Khouri, Blake Kost, Art Lange, Alan Licht, Howard Mandel, Dave Mandel, Brian Martin, Marc Masters, Joanne Murrell, Keith Munn, Will Montgomery, Alan Morton, John Mulvey, Ian Penman, Tony Perchard, Edwin Pouncey, Mike Raver, Simon Reynolds, Tom Ridge, Stephen Robinson, Peter Shapiro, Chris Sharp, Phil Sherrin, Bill Shoemaker, Mark Sharkey, Steve Smith, Nick Southgate, Dave Tompkins, David Toop, Elizabeth Winstanley, Dan Wadsworth, Derek Whalley, Ed Ward, Don Watson, Val Wilmer, Barry Withden

Images Amy & Tanweer, Frank Baur, Kariem Black, Chris Buck, Thomas Butler, Martin Ek, Robert Gallagher, City Hewitt, John Hooper, Simon Leigh, Sebastian Mayr, Dorian O'Neill, Savage Planet, Anna Sifton, Jon Talaga, Joe Ten, Tony Eva, Veronika, Johnny Volcano, Jake Walters, Koko Yoshida

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Subscriber special

With this month's issue, all *The Wire*'s subscribers will receive a free copy of *Exploratory Music From Portugal 05*



Compiled to coincide with this year's Atlantic Waves festival of new Portuguese music, which takes place in London between 22-30 November, *Exploratory Music From Portugal 05* collects tracks by some of that country's most adventurous musicians, including Rafael Toral, Manuel Mota, Sei Miguel and Ana Da Silva. As with the festival, the CD showcases a wide spectrum of musical approaches, from new takes on Portuguese folkforms to electronica, free improvisation, avant rock and beyond. The CD is given away free to all *The Wire*'s subscribers with copies of this month's issue. For more information on the Atlantic Waves festival go to www.atlanticwaves.org.uk

Exploratory Music From Portugal 05 is the latest instalment in an ongoing series of CDs that are specially produced for *The Wire* and given away to all the magazine's subscribers worldwide with selected issues of the zine. These CDs are only available to subscribers, and are not on sale with the magazine in the shops. If you are not yet a subscriber you can still get your hands on a copy of the CD by taking out a new subscription to *The Wire* this month.

For details of how to subscribe to *The Wire*, turn to page 104 of this month's issue or go to www.thewire.co.uk



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Letters

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UnAmerican activities

I would not wish Morgan Craft's art de occur, "Towards A New Consciousness" (Letters, *The Wire* 260), to disappear into its own echoes, as it seems to merit a response. Initially, I thought Craft was castigating *The Wire* for not featuring enough new young African-American avant-garde artists, of living in a nostalgic, new jazz comfort zone. Then I realised that Craft is, in fact, surveying the contemporary African-American avant-garde landscape and discovering, to his dismay, that it is practically depopulated. Hellooo? Anyone there?

Why is this? Systematic racism? Perhaps, though given the relative ease with which music can be made and disseminated nowadays, I'm not sure this is a relevant factor. There may be more subtle reasons for the current dearth. The vehicles presently available are either too academic (jazz), too clapped out (outside of a handful of the usual suspects, the Black Rock Coalition never really mustered much enthusiasm), or played out. Hip-hop and R&B are global in their outreach but so corporate and compromised, so in denial of, and disconnected from, the conditions in which many African-Americans live as to be anathema to anyone of good faith and serious creative intentions.

I wish Craft will in his quest for a 'new consciousness': I hope there is latent activity which his shock might bring to the surface. However, I'm galled at his assumption that it is vital that America, "still impressive in its scope, scale, confidence and arrogance", must be the cradle of any new musical activity. The solipsistic tendency of 'Americana' (as, imitating), they always call themselves as opposed to, I dare, 'people' runs, it seems, across the cultural spectrum, even onto the avant-garde. America über alles, New World or otherwise.

Here's a thought; why has it always got to be American? Suppose the cultural domination of America, a ruinous, warlike country which has traditionally asserted itself by bombing and, more significantly, consuming the rest of the world out of house and home, was something we could do without for a while? Suppose we do extend instead to the new musical voices emanating from Europe (including the UK Crime scene), the Middle East, the Far East, Australasia? Suppose America, black and white, instead of giving voice the whole damn time, showed a little humility and learned to put a cup up against its walls of cultural ignorance and listen?

Patrick Jameson via email

Secretly Canadian

Contributions to Rob Young on his Boards Of Canada feature (*The Wire* 260). I had always imagined this secretive duo to be a bit too coy by half, clucking up their sleeves at the meanings read into the obscure vagaries of their electronics by their rather sad legion of internet devotees, their 'silence' a cover for misanthropy or simply having nothing to say for themselves. How far that is from the case. Particularly impressive, to me, was Mike Sandison's analysis of the 'descending chord' section in Steve Wonder's "Living For The City": "I recognise something there where it feels like he's trying to translate into music something that is otherwise, that's not about the mundane." I'd always felt something similar but never expected to have it (semi-) articulated for me by a Board Of Canada, of all people.

Steve Kamphes, Edinburgh, UK

Silence is golden

In the early to mid-70s, I spent a lot of time listening to The Spontaneous Music Ensemble duo of John Stevens and Trevor Watts, who were then often getting into areas subsequently occupied by the New London Silence (pace *The Wire* 260). A published example of this can be found in part of "Concurs" on Quincentess 2 (Emanem CD), while Paul Rutherford can be heard doing something similar during "Osirac Seno" on The Gentle Ham Of The Bourgeoisie (Emanem CD). Stevens also devised slow moving or static concepts, most notably the "Sustained Piece", which can be heard performed by a large group on Mouthpiece (Emanem CD), as well as during several SME small group performance elsewhere.

Meanwhile, AMM were incorporating long actual silences in their performances, as can be heard on To Hear And Back Again (Marshlock CD). (Incidentally, Radu Mafait was then a renegade saxophone player on the London scene.) Stevens and Watts also went through a very austere period in 1972/3, when they limited their SME performances to a different kind of reductionism, just playing sparse staccato notes. So the New London Silence is very déja vu to me.

One difference between then and now is that the recent austere orthodoxy has gone on so long that it has become the emperor's new music – a frustrating vista of previously talented improvisers doing very little. I am glad that people are now coming out of this

restricted subliminal area. The results I've heard so far point to some line music ahead, just as it did when Stevens and Watts emerged from their hyper-austerity.

On another subject, regarding the review of John Stevens' *New Cool (Jazz & Improv, The Wire 256)*, please note that Stevens was using his full size jazz kit on this date, not his 'tiny kit'.

Martin Davidson Emanem, London, UK

Single-celled organisms

Having read the Epiphany (*The Wire* 259), I admire Philip Sherborne for his psychological strength at getting rid of half his record collection. However, I am quite surprised he did not ask Amoeba to bugger off when they charged him \$2.99 for a record by El General, especially after such an emotional amputation from him. Was that not merry? Philip, if I had known, I would have burnt it for you free of charge! These Amoeba people, do they really suck that much?

David Rengel Toulouse, France

Cassette pet peeve

You lot are always banging on about Techno-futurism and the like, so why are you always giving an enthusiastic platform to the likes of Sven Løgg ("The Persistence Of Memories", Letters, *The Wire* 260) and his smelly cardboard bundle of cassettes? What is this snobbishly retrograde, après-garde attitude to new technology? Cassettes were God's way of telling us to hurry up and invent the iPod. They were rubbish. They tangled, they snapped, they were ugly and messy, and more often than not, the first 15 minutes of a cassette side would fail to play properly before "twisting" to full volume. And would that I could have back the accumulated minutes I spent waiting for them to rumble. This was not a medium to celebrate, but to hate into the skip once something better arrived. Ironically, so doubt when cassettes were invented, someone like Mr Løgg would have been piping up about how he'd stick with his 'real' collection of sheet music, thank you very much.

Robert Milne via email

Corrections

Issue 260 We made two errors regarding Brothwell Cat Motel. On the cover, they were mistakenly listed as Brothfield Cat Motel, while on the contents page we dropped the 'K' from Campbell Kneale. Apologies.

The Joined-up World of The Wire

The Wire 262: on sale from 17 November

All copies of next month's December issue will come with a free CD, *The Wire Tapper 14*. See page 106 for details

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www.thewire.co.uk is *The Wire*'s official Web presence. New items on site this month include audio streams from the cover version's special, the unedited transcript of Edwyn Pouncey's Earth interview, an audio extract from Steve Reich's *Invisible Kebab*, video footage from Norway's Numatic Festival, and more. Sign up to *The Conduit* at www.thewire.co.uk for our fortnightly newsletter containing regular web updates

Adventures In Modern Music on Resonance 104.4 FM

A weekly show of new music hosted by *The Wire* staff, broadcasting across central London on 104.4 FM every Thursday 9:30-11pm GMT, repeated every Wednesday 7:30-9am GMT, with simultaneous streaming at www.resonancefm.com. Shows are then archived as downloadable MP3s at www.thewire.co.uk/webster.php

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Bitstream

News and more from under the radar.

Compiled by The Trawler



Pe steps: Eivind Aadland and Zenna Parkins sleep it off (left) and Zenna Parkins strings it up



Karlheinz Stockhausen will open the International Freeze Art Fair on 21 October in London. He will deliver a lecture entitled "Composer And Interpreter", which will be fleshed out by musical examples provided by American bassist horn player Suzanne Stephens and Dutch alto flautist Katrinika Pasveer. The following evening, Stockhausen will give another concert of his electronic works at the Old Billingsgate Market, reminiscent of his appearance at London's The Barbican in 2001. He will "perform", if that's the word, Kontakt and Octophone, the latter of which in particular is dependent on "correct loudspeaker distribution" for maximum impact. Tickets are available either by telephone (00 44 870 890 9534) or at www.stockhausen.com >> **mono.kultur** is a new magazine from Berlin, which deals with figures from across the media – film, literature, music, image, even architecture and fashion. The publication takes pride in being undistracted by adverts and supplementary titbits. In order to do justice to its subjects, it features just the one interview (in English) per issue – September 2005's edition, for example, is devoted solely to founder member of Raster Noton Carsten Nicolai. That said, **mono.kultur** isn't too heavy, with a strong emphasis on visual content – in the Nicolai interview, there is even interaction between the visuals and the text, as the interviewer presents him with images of a weaving pattern for automated looms and a screen shot from Nicolai's desktop for comparison. **mono.kultur** will appear ten times per year. www.mono-kultur.com >> French avant trumpet legend **Jac Berrocal** teams up with Brooklyn-based Japanese cassette master **Aki Onda** and violinist and WWO contributor Dan Warburton for a string of rare European dates this month: shows include Tours, France (Total Meeting, 12 November, with Alexandre Belleguer), Paris (Point Ephémère, 17, with J.P. Paavola), Stockholm, Sweden (Fylkingen, 18), Norrköping, Sweden (Annan Musik, 19), Geneva, Switzerland (12 Cive, 24) and Nice, France (26). Further details available at www.parisfranceatlantic.com >>

December sees the DVD release of *Liebeslieder*, the documentary about **Einstürzende Neubauten** first released in 1993. Commissioned, in one of countless examples of the German sense of humour by WDR-TV's architecture division, it tells the story of the group's extraordinary beginnings, when Blixa Bargeld and NH Uehrh created music by hurling themselves against the metal walls of an autobahn flyover. Thereafter, it tracks their development as they collapsed boundaries, not just physically, such as when they drilled through the floor of the London ICA, but also the theoretical boundaries between music, performance and visual art. As a bonus, the DVD will also include footage from a 1993 tour as well as their first ever video clips, "Intern" and "Blume" >> This month sees the publication of **Warp by Black Dog**. A collection of essays, unseen photos, documents and artifacts relating to the rise of the Sheffield label, home to Boards Of Canada, Autochore, Prefuse 73 and Squarepusher among others. Warp's independence has been preserved by their adept handling of new technologies and sensitivity towards the creative autonomy of their artists. Authors are *The Wire*'s own Rob Young and art director/writer Adrian Shaughnessy. Warp is the first of a series of publications, entitled *Labels Unlimited*, which will profile eerily independent labels whose identity has helped shape the music they release >> There's a significant musical component to this year's Performa festival, devoted to new visual art performance, which begins on 3 November in New York City. The launch night will see the premiere of Danish Artist **Jesper Just**'s new multimedia work *Opera In New York*, which will feature The Finnish Shouting Men's Choir and a moving image musical score devised by Christian Marclay. On 15 November, **David Grubbs** collaborates with poet Susan Howe on a performance work based on two of Howe's poems, while during December **Zenna Parkins** provides the score for choreographer Jojo Jasperne's new work, *Phons*, www.thewatchon.org >> **Table Of The Elements** have announced details

of their showcase event on 15-16 March 2006 in Austin Texas, which goes by the title of Festival No 3/ SXSW Showcase: Dubnau. The event will feature the first appearance in 20 years of **Rhys Chatham** and his nine piece Guitar Army, which features Ernie Brooks of The Modern Lovers and ex-Swan drummer Jonathan Kane, Berlin's Arnold Dreyblatt and his Orchestra Of Exotic Strings, as well as Tony Conrad, Zenna Parkins and San Augustin >> There's been something of a shake-up in the Autumn schedule of Resonance FM. Put out to temporary pasture are *Smothering The Surface* and *The Daggers*, hosted by *The Wire*'s **Mike Barnes** and **Edwin Pouncey/Savage Penell** respectively. However, Edwin will return as co-host of a monthly Black Metal programme on Resonance on Friday nights at 10:30pm, in which those with a predilection for Satanic goats and the like will doubtless be aurally sated >> Stories that have recently done the rounds concerning **Mark E Smith** are to be taken with a pinch of salt. Following earlier rumours that he was a navi to Christopher Eccleston for the role of Dr Who comes another report that he has been asked to read the football results on BBC1's *Final Score* programme on 17 November. More bona fide, however, is *The Fall's* Garden Mix. Broadcast on Shane Quinlan's *Garden Of Earthly Delights* show on Central Radio/Milton Keynes in August, it was originally a common or garden compilation of recent Fall tracks. However, Paul Wilson has added a new twist on the concept of "cover versions". He's scanned in a selection of Fall CD covers, converted those scanned images into sound, then subjected that sound to further manipulation. The results can be found online at www.n-speech.net/sound/fall_covers.html >> *Sunn O)))*'s **Stephen O'Malley** is collaborating with the artist Banks Viollette as the sound/wave designer on a new piece entitled *On Black Wings/Six Chained Blood*, which will be exhibited from 17 November onwards at the Gallerie Rodolphe Janssen in Brussels and follows a previous collaboration together, *Blood*, which showed at New York's Barbara Gladstone Gallery during the Summer. □



JACKSON AND HIS COMPUTER BAND

By David Stubbs

Smash it up



Glam nerd Jackson Fourgeaud

"For me, this is a very personal and egomaniacal record," says Paris-based 26-year-old Jackson Fourgeaud of his Warp debut album *Smash*, which reduces Techno to new extremes of disintegration. "When Techno started, it was supposed to be about this tribal, collective culture gone global, as well as about establishing a constant flow in the music. My album is exactly the opposite of that. Not only is it about personal expression, but it's about rupture, conflict, the danger and brutal aspect of things. Even having my face on the cover is breaking a taboo. I didn't want this just to be another record with graphics on the covers, evoking the personal. I'm happy to portray myself as the 'glam nerd'."

Smash, the most violently emphatic, ambitious and 'warts and all' finest Techno album of 2005, is the latest in a historical series of records which revitalise electronic music by defying its linear, 4/4 conventions. Although you can trace high, sweeping arcs of pop progression amid its chaos, at surface level, *Smash* consists of roudie upon roudie of fragmented detritus of dismantled or abandoned genres, pulverised by heavy, if irregular rhythms. With every beat comes another accretion of sonic shards, each a little shock to the system, like treading on something metal and unexpected.

Fourgeaud first became interested in making music in his mid-teens, when he found himself intrigued by the studio sound equipment used by his mother, the folk and blues singer Paula Moore. He was particularly drawn to state of the art dance music because he found it a relief to stumble on a genre that confounded and annoyed his hip, Hendrix and Pink Floyd-loving parents. A brief stint as a model in his late teens earned him the wherewithal to purchase the necessary instruments.

Smash was assembled over four long years of laying down tracks at home and in Parisian studios, of

editing, processing and reprocessing, its elaborately woven patchwork fabric draws on memory flashes of ancient funk and disco, glam, pop, PlayStation and contemporary electronica. At times, it's like listening to ten Daft Punk albums at once – there's so much more going on here than in some of the cuter, poppier French House of recent years, which Fourgeaud describes as "developing a brand or a logo, then creating the music to fit that logo". *Smash*, by contrast, flourished as a result of its creator having had no notion where he was going or what he was doing, even as he was creating it.

"All I knew was that I wanted to make something that answered to a feeling in the pit of my stomach," he says. "I tried so many approaches in order to do this that what I had in the end was an accumulation of studies, of different persuasive approaches, for example. In the end, I realised that this accumulation in itself was taking on a sort of organic quality, where even the failures were as important as the successes. So I decided to retain that. In the end, I felt I was not so much making songs as chipping at a sculpture, using digital tools."

This reference to the plastic arts is typical – he has alluded to his work as "antique futurist". Moreover, despite drawing for its subject matter on the American music Fourgeaud absorbed during stints in the US at summer camps when he was the only non-English speaking child, his music is a contemporary echo of ideas in the air in early 20th century European art. There's a brutalist simultaneity about tracks like "Rock On" and the subliminal Glaxo stomp of "Teen Beat Ocean", with their sparkily contrasting layers and exquisite points of difference, while Fourgeaud has referred to the "constantly chopped up audiovisual environment we're exposed to" as an inspiration. Moreover, it denies easy conventional consumption – like Autechre's later work, its multi-dimensionality and

shapeshifting mean it has to be regarded, rather than half listened to, still less danced to.

"I love this idea," laughs Fourgeaud modestly, "but I didn't plan on that. My culture is very superficial. I have little flavours of references to artists like Dali but, you know, I never even read anything by André Breton. All I knew is that I wanted to involve some idea of the history of music alongside the contemporary. There is so much electronic music around which doesn't give a shit about its heritage. Then, there are retro records which don't give a shit about the present day. By making an album that wasn't retro and wasn't entirely modern, I wanted to step outside of time altogether."

Despite her supposed pique at the jagged intricacies of contemporary dance music, one of the keynote aspects of *Smash* is the appearance of Fourgeaud's mother, who sings on the opening track, "Utopia", as well as the curiously broken up lyric of "Fast Life". She contributed at an early stage of the process. Fourgeaud, looking to give "Utopia" a bit of a spiritual lift, but afraid to hire in outside vocalists and loath to go for the easy option of a sample, asked her over to dinner and then to sing for her supper. Moreover, he got his four year old niece to narrate the disoriented fairy tale of "Oh Boy", while he was over at his grandmother's.

"You know, in gypsy or flamenco music, it's a part of the culture that the whole family is involved," says Fourgeaud, "I like the anti-cool aspect of having your mother sing on your album. I'm proud of that, because it stands in opposition to this whole silly tradition of rock teenage rebellion, the idea that you have to break traditions in order to become a man." Irony, of course, given that it was precisely such a rebellious impulse which gave birth to Jackson And His Computer Band, but it's of such beautifully unresolved and perfectly embraceable contradictions that *Smash* is made up. □ *Smash* is out now on Warp

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MAZEN KERBAJ By Julian Cowley



War child, Mazen Kerbaj

War and peace



"I can detect in some of my solo music a strong influence of the war soundscapes of my youth," remarks Lebanese trumpeter Mazen Kerbaj, whose birth in Beirut in 1975 coincided with the start of the long factional civil war that tore the city apart. "I never meant to make helicopter or bomb sounds on the trumpet, but I have to admit that a lot of the sounds I use are very similar to war sounds. Even my way of using them and their relation to silence is somehow connected to the war."

In light of this observation, Kerbaj's radical departure from the trumpet's inherited instrumental identity and conventional terms of playing, which can be heard on the recently issued solo set *Brt Vrt Zrt Krt* (Al Maslakh), acquires extra emotional and psychological depth, not to mention historical context. "I have also to admit," he confesses, "that I've been nostalgic for those war sounds of my youth, as you can be nostalgic for a smell or picture, or the taste of a cake that you can never find again. At least not with the same flavour that it used to have."

It's a sobering admission. The violence and destruction that characterized the normativity of his childhood reverberate into a controlled, yet uncompromising, and idiosyncratic music. With a touch of irony, he adds, "it should be no surprise that Peter Brezina's *Machine Gun* was the first disc of European Improv I bought."

Kerbaj started playing trumpet around a decade ago. He took formal lessons, but exposure to European improvised music, free jazz and contemporary composition blew open his musical horizons. "I listened to saxophone and trombone players on CD since there seemed to be almost no history for the trumpet in free improvisation, except [trumpeter and composer] Rajesh Mehta's inspiring work," he states. "I was jealous of all the guitarists and pianists who could 'prepare' their instruments so easily, and felt I had to find a way to do the same on trumpet."

His ongoing search draws unexpected sounds from the instrument that can then be developed into a musically useful vocabulary. At present he uses the trumpet as a tone generator, extending it with a long rubber hose attached to a tenor saxophone mouthpiece. He employs circular breathing techniques and blocks the bell with objects such as bowls and metal sheets that vibrate to create an additional percussive layer, which can also be manipulated.

Kerbaj's explorations were well underway by the time he encountered others involved in deconstructing and reconstructing the trumpet's musical potential, such as Axel Dörmér and Greg Kelley. In 2003, he met Austrian quartetone trumpeter Franz Hautzinger, who was playing in Lebanon with Marwan Abado, a Vienna based Palestinian folk singer. The two trumpeters improvised informally and found they had techniques in common. Concerts followed, along with a duo recording, *Abu Tarek*, released by the Portuguese label Creative Sources. They also play together in Hautzinger's quartet *Oriental Space*, with guitarist Sharif Sehnaoui and Helge Hestenegger on sampler.

Kerbaj and Sehnaoui play regularly as Roubaj3 with auto saxophonist Christine Sehnaoui. The group's name is based on the Arabic for quartet, and in performance they are joined by guest percussionists. This arrangement first arose in 2002 when Lê Quyn Ninh played with them in Beirut. Later that year, in Paris, they were joined by Oliver Brisson, and the Roubaj3 concept took form. "Since then we always try to find occasions to invite a different drummer or percussionist to join us," Kerbaj explains. "This quartet has the advantages of both long-term working groups and first encounters, because the fourth musician – especially a percussionist – can change the shape of the core trio's music." Norwegian improvising percussionist Ingar Zach joined them for

the electrifying session that resulted in their recent release, *Roubaj3* (Al Maslakh).

Kerbaj launched the label Al Maslakh (The Slaughterhouse) earlier this year "to publish the unpublishable", and document the nascent Lebanese Improv scene. He not only oversees its output; as a talented visual artist and maker of comic books, he also designs the covers. "I have the same interest in improvisation or rhythmic deconstruction in both media," he observes. The next release will feature a duo of Peter Brötzmann and percussionist Michael Zerang recorded in Beirut this summer.

Beirut's improvising scene is small, but firmly established due to the MILL association, which Zabet set up with Sharif and Christine Sehnaoui in 2000. "We were the only three free improvisers in the country and probably in all the Middle East and Gulf region, excluding Israel," he says. "Sharif has strongly influenced my evolution on many levels. His prepared guitar drones and bowing techniques obliged me to dig hard to find ways to keep up. Christine is also very challenging to play with." The Sehnaouis spend much of each year in Paris, but, since 2003, they have helped Kerbaj stage the annual Irjil festival, drawing to Beirut international improvisers such as pianist Fred Van Hove and trombonist Johannes Bauer.

Kerbaj has just returned from a tour of America, performing with Roubaj3 among other dates, including a trio with bassist Mike Bullock and cellist Vic Rawlings. Concerts in Europe and the United States provide opportunities for him to "play for 'trained' ears", he says. "The audience in Beirut is new to this music and their enthusiasm is really rewarding for us," he concludes, "but it's also necessary to test our work – in progress – before an audience with a history in free improvising." (Mazen Kerbaj appears at the LMC Festival on 5 November – see Out There. *Brt Vrt Zrt Krt* is out now on Al Maslakh. www.kerbaj.com)

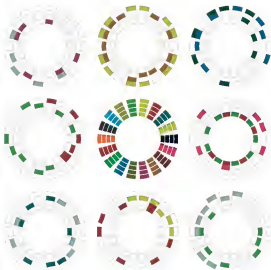
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OREN MARSHALL By Phil England

Tuba traveller: Oren Marshall

"It's a story about a guy who figures out that if he concentrates hard enough and meditates, he can make his limbs disappear," says tuba player Oren Marshall, explaining the title of his remarkable debut solo CD, *Introduction To The Story Of Speedy Sponds Part One: In A Silent Room*. "Eventually his whole body disappears and he becomes this spirit called Speedy Sponds. And in his spirit form, he enters people's dreams. That's the long and short of it."

Written for a performance at the disused hydraulic power station in East London's industrial wasteland of Wapping, Marshall's suite bathes in three to four seconds of natural reverb. "It's this huge room, this hard space with all this old machinery around," he enthuses. Toward the end of the piece, he plays five tubas at once using a series of plastic tubes.

"You can put the instruments on the different bits of machinery around the audience," he says.

The piece passes through a number of contrasting sections – largely determined by effects pedals – at a relaxed, expansive pace. There are plaintive laments played over ambient soundwashes, distorted vocal solos over chugging basslines, and use of feedback that makes the tuba sound like a guitar. One episode sounds like a whale song and another like a conversation between elephants. There's some looping and layering with the help of digital delay, but it's all performed live and without overdubs.

A recent spate of promotional concerts has included stops at Rough Trade and Roy's Jazz shops in London, as well as an appearance at the Manchester Jazz Festival and a string of concerts in Holland. "It becomes a different piece in a different space," he explains, as we huddle together to avoid the rain outside Ilar Italia opposite Soho's Ronnie Scott's jazz club. "The shape is the same all the time but it can change depending on the feeling or the atmosphere."

One of the reasons why the CD is impossible to pin down stylistically is due to his wide-ranging musical background. Marshall grew up in the suburbs of southwest London and was the product of mixed parents. "My mum's from the Middle East and my dad's from India," he says. "Music was a way to cut through the challenges of growing up in London and to connect with people."

Marshall realised his early dream of playing in a professional orchestra when his teacher had a stroke and went into a coma. He stood in for his ailing mentor in both the London Symphony Orchestra and the London Brass chamber group, but quickly became disillusioned with the orchestral lifestyle. And 19 years later, he still plays with London Brass, an ensemble that can count Moondog, Django Bates, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Michael Nyman, Jack DeJohnette and John Surman among their past and present collaborators.

At around the same time in the mid-80s, Marshall became involved with the British jazz big band Loose Tubes just as they were taking off – something that was much more in tune with his wide-eyed approach to the world of music. He's not on the records, but he played numerous concerts with them and featured on their first demo tape. "That was exactly what I wanted to do – because of their openness to incorporating different styles, and learning different musical languages," he says.

Marshall was probably the only musician to have played in both Loose Tubes and The Jazz Warriors – penitential collectives that were largely split along lines of colour. "I didn't feel that," says Marshall. "What was weird for me was the whole classical thing, which was much more segregated." But he remembers how, after a gig on the same night as a football match between England and Cameroon, one of his fellow musicians expressed relief that England had won. "He said, 'Ah, I can walk home safely tonight.' I realise I was probably a bit ignorant of those issues going on. I just never felt it within myself."

Over the years he has continued to collaborate with the musicians from Loose Tubes in various spin-off projects such as Microgroove, Django Bates's Delightful Precapoe, Snapdragons Circus and various projects involving trumpeter Chris Batchelor, saxophonist Steve Buckley and bassist Eddie Parker.

But it was discovering improvised music that allowed him to develop his individual voice. Marshall toured with The Library Orchestra and then played in Derek Bailey's Company Week in 1992. He went on to play in a series of trios with drummer Steve Noble, first featuring guitarist Bely Jenkins, then guitarist

Communication routes

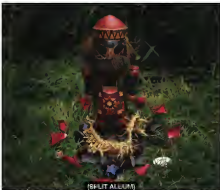
Davey Williams and, finally, Steve Buckley. "They were great fun and I learnt loads," he says. "People would come up and wouldn't believe it was an improvisation, but thought it was a structured piece. That's also where I had the chance to really wring out the possibilities of what I could do with my pedals set-up."

Marshall says that although he drives, the title of his first album with The Charming Transport Band, *Time Spent Waiting At Traffic Lights (Slowfoot)* – released in the mid-90s, part solo, part collaborations – was equally a personal metaphor about not getting around to his own projects. Thankfully, the gridlock appears to be clearing. "What seems to be happening in general is that things I've instigated or been part of instigating, I'm doing more of," he says.

Earlier this autumn, BBC Radio 3 broadcast his latest composition, *The Downfall of Man*, a duo for tuba, penny whistle and bass clarinet. As well as his various solo concerts, Marshall toured the UK in October as a guest of The FIRE Collective, and he is looking forward to touring and recording this month with Batchelor and Buckley's quintet *Big Air*, featuring Myra Melford and Jim Black – "One of my favourite ever projects," he says. He is also playing in a new trio with Portuguese musicians Rafael Toral and César Burago as part of the Atlantic Waves festival; in addition, he relishes the prospect of playing London's Scala venue at the invitation of singer-songwriter Patrick Wolf. "I've played big venues with Microgroove when we supported Gil Scott-Heron and Roy Ayers, but I've never had the opportunity to really tear the place apart on solo tuba."

Marshall uses a dietary analogy to sum up his approach to music. "I'm just playing," he concludes. "The way I pick up my influences is like whatever the mouth eats. So I could have a salt beef sandwich today and pizza tomorrow, in fact the day after, and sushi the next. And in terms of audiences, it's whoever's got open ears. It's about communicating." □
Introduction To The Story Of Speedy Sponds Part One: In A Silent Room is out now on Slowfoot. Oren Marshall supports Patrick Wolf at London Scala on 31 October. For details of his live activities throughout November see Out There

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Andy Hamilton joins the ethnomusicological trail to hear gamelan far from the maddening tourist crowds



A kecak performance in Ubud (left), a billboard outside the venue

It's true, Bali is a paradise. The small Indonesian island is beautiful, and music and art are found there in unparalleled concentration and abundance. The fertile soil and high rice yield allow the Balinese leisure time to devote to their crafts, intended both for tourists and for the gods. Their religion is a medley of animism and Buddhism, and brightly coloured, intricately worked offerings are seen everywhere, particularly on doorsteps in the morning. Statues are clothed in what look like chequered tablecloths, black and white to signify the balance of good and evil.

The NQweda bombings in Kuta in 2002, and then the Schepelle Corby drug smuggling case – which dominated Australian news headlines for much of the last year – have kept visitor levels below their peak. The recent bombings, as we go to press, will do likewise for a time. But when I stayed in Ubud, the artistic capital in the interior, the streets were busy enough, with scooter drivers touring for tourist business. This was in complete contrast to the view across the tranquil rice fields from my bungalow accommodation at Greenfield on the edge of Ubud. I was visiting in July on the suggestion of my guide Stephen Davies, one of many Western ethnomusicologists following in the footsteps of Colin McPhee, who in the 1930s revealed to the West the island's glorious musical culture. This is the best time of year to make the trip: the month-long arts festival in the capital Denpasar features performers from all over the island, and, as Bali is just south of the Equator, the winter – or dry season – takes a few degrees off the heat.

The Balinese have a huge pride in their traditional culture. Although extremely friendly, many of them no doubt share the view quoted by Davies in his book *Musical Works And Performances*: "They are tourists and we are civilised." When tourism took off in the 70s, cultural guidelines saw that exclusive resorts such as Nusa Dua were created to limit the direct impact. Village music and dance groups were supported by competitions, and schools of dance and art were created, replacing the traditional master-disciple relationship and standardising dance movements. Traditional stories such as the Hindu Ramayana epic have been turned into ballets aimed at the tourism industry.

The festival is not particularly aimed at tourists, though, and features classical dances such as Legong and Baris, which are wedded to the music. I caught a superb Legong performance by a dance group from the town of Sukawati. As before every performance, there was a blessing by priests, and the mostly local audience was, as always, enthusiastic and

knowledgeable. All this comes with a degree of informality. Usually a dog wanders onstage at some point – here, they're mangy, emaciated beasts you wouldn't want to pat – but this time it was a small child. Three pieces were performed: a traditional narrative about a prince, a princess and a bird; a more abstract piece representing two herons flying over a lake; and a dance of two monkeys. These featured incredibly sophisticated performances by young girls, stately but full of delicate expression – there are nearly 30 different hand gestures, for instance, and when the dancers are stationary they have to avoid appearing 'dead' by betraying some tiny movement, such as fluttering fingers or eyes. The stylised movements are locked into the music of the gamelan.

Java and Bali are the heart of gamelan – 'gamelan' is Indonesian for orchestra, though in Bali they refer to the orchestra as a 'gong'. In Bali, gamelan flourished in splendid isolation until the gradual encroachment of Dutch colonialists during the 19th century. While most kinds of Javanese gamelan remain introspective, a brilliant new style appeared in the villages of north Bali early in the last century, rapidly overtaking the courtly traditional gamelan in popularity. This highly syncopated gamelan gong kebyar requires feats of extraordinary musical virtuosity – not least by the xylophone players, who damp each note with their fingers while playing the next one. But the courtly gamelan semar pegelangan can still be heard, while the gamelan pelegongan accompanies legong dances. Each variety of gamelan has a special function, instrumentation, repertoire and tuning system. The music is learned painstakingly by rote, and there's little improvisation.

The orchestra consists of several kinds of gongs and various sets of xylophones and other metallophones, while the drum or leading actor is leader. Each instrument is tuned to its own particular orchestra and so musicians don't play with others outside their ensemble. Unlike Javanese gamelan, where there are two sets of instruments, one tuned to the five note scale of *slendro* and the other to the seven note *peleg*, only one scale is used in Balinese gamelan. The highly developed polyphony or heterophony – where one melody is played differently by the multiple voices – has a cyclical structure totally opposed to the linear forms of the West. Over this variegated pattern of hammered sound floats the un interrupted melodic line of the voice, flute or rebab, a bowed string instrument – the line is sung especially when, as is often the case, the gamelan is used to accompany theatrical performances.

Outside the festival, I went to a regular tourist event, the kecak, fire and trance dance at Tarnan San Temple in the centre of Ubud. Walter Spies, another Balinese, commissioned kecak in the 1930s as a tourist performance, and it was inspired by trance dances where male group singing has an ecstatic role. This performance featured an exciting episode from the Ramayana epic, but the tourists were less attentive than the locals at the Festival. The kecak (which Westerners also call the monkey dance) is featured on alternate evenings to the frog dance, which is even more of a tourist event.

Finally I went to a private performance at Yayasan Polosolen near Ubud, an arts centre run by Australian ethnomusicologist Doug Myers – yes, there are more ethnomusicologists per square mile in Bali than anywhere in the world. ('Yayasan' means association or society, 'polosolen' means pure art.) Like Colin McPhee, Myers has made the island his home, and runs a label reissuing historic recordings of all varieties of gamelan from Bali and Java (www.gongch.com). The Yayasan runs several performing groups, but this evening played host to the group *Leko Cepakas Sari*. 'Leko is a rare form,' comments Stephen Davies, who commissioned the performance. 'It belongs to the aged dancers, "scold" dances in which women dance with male audience members – though it's a clean version. But it also has a connection with legong. The orchestra of this particular group is quite unique.' As an honoured guest, I was first to get called to the dance floor, with truly ecstatic results.

Next day, Doug Myers gave me a tutorial and explained how the instruments of the gamelan are mostly in pairs, tuned – by shaving the metal – fractionally apart. The 'beating' effect that results gives these ensembles their shimmering brilliance. Music is played for the gods, Myers adds, and in a way by the gods, since they're responsible for how far the instruments go out of tune between tunings. Though Indonesian versions of Western pop, rock and dance music are heard over the island, the gamelan, sustained by its religious associations, is genuinely popular. While the academic experts try to preserve its rarer forms, authentic gamelan seems to be surviving the pressures of Bali's growing Westernisation. But as Davies comments, "in the end the abandonment of the communication way of life will take the arts out of the hands of the many amateurs and put them in the hands of a few professionals – lots will be lost in the process. Just like in the West." ☐ Thanks to Stephen Davies and Doug Myers for their help with this article

Invisible Jukebox: STEVE REICH



Every month we play a musician a series of records which they are asked to identify and comment on - with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear

**Tested by Mike Barnes.
Photography: Eva Vermandel**

Born in 1936 in New York, Steve Reich's music studies began in the late 1950s, a time dominated by the rigours of serialism and the mathematically involved music of the Darmstadt school. Reich studied at Cornell University, Juilliard and Mills College, Oakland, from which he graduated in 1963, then he set about rebelling against this academic orthodoxy in music teaching.

Fascinated by syncopated rhythms and phase patterns, Reich pared down his musical vocabulary, composing the gradual tape-phasing pieces *Come Out and It's Gonna Rain* in 1966, and their instrumental counterparts, *Piano Phase* and *Violin Phase*, the following year. Reich was soon labelled as a minimalist, after the movement in the visual arts, together with another disillusioned ex-music student, Philip Glass, and composers like Terry Riley and La Monte Young, all of whom sought a more direct musical language. In 1968, Reich came up with *Pendulum Music*, in which microphones were swung on long leads over speakers on the floor causing feedback. Nudging an hour, *Drumming* (1971) was his first large-scale work, influenced by his drumming studies at the University of Accra in Ghana in 1970.

Another influential musical form was Balinese gamelan, which he studied in the USA. It informed the greater harmonic content of *Music For Mallet Instruments, Voices And Organ* (1973). This was developed further in the kaleidoscopic ensemble pieces *Music For 18 Musicians*, *Music For A Large Ensemble* and *Octet* (1979), later retitled *Eight Lines*. Reich both developed his writing for voice and examined his Jewish roots in *Tehilim* (1981), inspired by Hebrew cantillation.

In 1989, Reich wrote *Different Trains* for string quartet, samples and tape which referenced his journeys between New York and California as a child during World War Two and the fate of European Jews in the Holocaust. Into the 90s, Reich developed his interest in narrative strands in music theatre projects like *The Cave*, which he wrote with his partner, the installation and video artist Beryl Korot, and also their multimedia production, *Three Tales*, premiered in 2002.

Reich's music continues to develop along a number of paths, including multiple instrumental pieces like *Nagoya Marimbas* (1994), *Proverb* (1995), based on medieval French counterpoint, and *City Life*, in which he incorporates his urban field recordings. His most recent work, *You Are (Variations)*, for six-part chorus and large ensemble, uses extracts of philosophical texts. The Jukebox took place in London.

CHARLIE PARKER "BONGO BEEP"

FROM ANTHOLOGY JACCORDI 1947

Sounds like Charlie Parker. I used to know the title, but I can't anymore.
It's "Bongo Beep". This has Max Roach on drums. I could tell that wasn't Kenny Clarke, Well, this is the kind of stuff that I heard at the age of 14 that, along with Johann Sebastian Bach and Igor Stravinsky, woke me up to who I was.

What sort of music did you listen to when you were growing up?

The records in the house were like the overture to Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, Beethoven's fifth, the Schostakovich (finished), Aaron Copland's Grand Canyon Suite, George Gershwin, some Gilbert and Sullivan – you know, middle-class favourites. But I do love George Gershwin. Probably there was some Mozart somewhere, but I never heard any Haydn and I certainly didn't hear any Bach – anything before 1750. The popular music I heard was Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Broadway shows, but I never heard any jazz. It was as if someone said, 'Hey, there's another room in the house that you haven't been in yet,' and opens the door, and out comes Charlie Parker, Bach and Stravinsky. When I heard these musics in private quick succession on recordings, [I thought] 'Hey, wait a minute, this is what I've been waiting for!'

How did you get into jazz drumming?

I was in high school and I had a friend who was a better pianist than I was and who was actually beginning to study jazz, so I just decided I was going to be the drummer. God knows why. I had been studying piano but I'd never made that much progress, so I began studying with Roland Kohloff, who in those days was called Butch Kohloff. He eventually turned out to be the tympanist with the New York Philharmonic. But in those days – I'm talking about 1950 – he would play Gene Krupa solos in the local movie house with 'glow in the dark' sticks [laughs]. Anyway, he gave me very good basic snare drum technique and something called stick control, which is a hand alternation pattern that I realised later had a lot to do with the systematic thinking that I got into. And of course, the paradigm is one of these hand coordination patterns, and became part [of the mechanistic rhythm] of *Different Trains* much, much later on. If you need a locomotive you can't get better than that.

What was the name of your first jazz group?

I can't remember. But later on, at Cornell [University], I put together my own band, which had my own name on it. When I got out of Cornell in 1957, I came down to New York and started studying composition with Hall Overton. Hall was a jazz musician and Juilliard graduate, and a student of Vincent Persichetti. He was also a very close friend of Thelonious Monk. Monk gave these very well known concerts in the late 50s at the Town Hall and the arrangements for the big band that he put together were by my teacher, Hall. He was a marvellous guy. He was the one that really got me involved with Miles Davis's *Milestones*, that got me working with the modes as opposed to the major and minor keys, and working with canons, which became the backbone of my music. So all these things fit together.

MUSZIKÁS

"THE ROOSTER IS CROWING"

FROM MAMAMOROS THE LOST JEWISH MUSIC OF TRANSYLVANIA
PUNENAL 1998

I've not heard this before, but I'm guessing Eastern Europe. It's like something I'd hear in a Hungarian restaurant. I don't think this was the kind of stuff that Bartók recorded. [Locals come in] Nice voice. Lovely, beautiful language. No, I take it back; this is better than the restaurant [laughs].

This is a reconstruction job that the Hungarian traditional group Muszikás made of Jewish music they gathered in Romania and Hungary, a tradition that was thought to have been destroyed in the Holocaust. Another collector heard their arrangements and commented that 'the dead notes are alive again'.

What you just played is terra incognita to me. My limited background in 'Jewish music' is really just studying the chant of the Torah, the scripture, in synagogues in the West and in recordings that I actually made at Israel of Jews from Baghdad, Jews from Iraq, Kurdistan and Koshin, India. What you're playing, I don't even recognise it as being specifically Jewish, because so far as I understand it and I'm not an expert in this at all – Jews who were living in eastern Europe were picking up on local music and doing their versions of it.

So where does the chanting you use in *Tehilim* originally come from?

It's entirely my invention. I've said this over and over again, and I'm always told what I did, and it's always wrong. I did study cantillation and the only effect that it had on me musically nobody can perceive. It's actually in the first flute melody in *Octet* – or *Eight Lines*, as this piece became known, a long melody line made up of a number of shorter patterns strung together. It's not that it sounds Jewish, it's just that in the way that you chant Torah and the way Muslims, I believe, chant Allah in the Koran, there are little motifs that you learn by ear from your teacher. These are signified in Jewish scripture by a little accent mark. It actually is an ancient musical notation. The Greeks called it *chronos*, showing with the hand how the music went... I discovered this by reading a book called *Jewish Music* by Abraham Ideleson, who was a contemporary of Bartók, and who used to go around the Middle East collecting the chanting of Yemenite Jews, who lived in Arab countries, at the same time as Bartók was going around with his Edison phonograph collecting folk songs in Transylvania and eastern Europe. What he discovered was that there was a real similarity between the way the Yemenites sung the psalms and Gregorian chant.

Anyway, that's the sort of study that I had of Jewish music. This kind of music that you're playing eventually leads today to The Klezmatics and to Klezmer, which is a kind of upbeat rooster music that might have been played at Jewish weddings in eastern Europe before Hitler. I can admit that I'm a little bit of a klezmer, the musicians who follow it, but it was just something that I never got into. I wanted to find out what was the nub of this thing, what was the core of Jewish music. And the core of it, of what is native to the Jews, is in the synagogue. And that oral tradition of one man chanting from the parchment scroll is the one that I tried to follow up, in the Western tradition and in the non-Western tradition.

SUSUMU YOKOTA

"GEKKOH"

FROM SAYAKA KEIJI 2000

I'm interested in your reaction to this. [Immediately] Well, I know that, [Persuasion comes in] Whoops, I don't know that after all. Uh-oh, time to call the lawyers! [Laughs]. Gosh, I thought I was aware of all the various samplings but this is a new one. OK, folks, it's the beginning of *Music For 18 Musicians*, "Pulse", pretty much staying on one chord and added percussion, and let's see what happens. Is this recent? Yes, 2000. It's by Japanese musician and DJ Susumu Yokota.

[Reads press quotes on sleeve] 'Electronic album of the year.' Hey, I want a piece of the action. And you said it. The Wire. Hey, guilty as charged, man. Get two lawyers! Ah, he's reharmonising my harmony,

different bass. It's nice. I like his choice of rhythm. Well, you know, this is pretty. As a track it's nicely done and I guess my attitude to all this stuff in general is that I write a piece of music and if people listen to it and love it, I feel good, right? Now, if other musicians hear it—aside from all the legal issues—and they get something out of it, that's even more so. In and of itself, they say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery. But wouldn't you make the distinction between imitation and someone actually helping themselves to a piece of your music?

I think here he's obviously taking off in his own direction. He liked the choice of a pulse and chose one of the chords, and from there went on his way. Even when I heard "Little Huffy Clouds" by The Orb (which samples Reich's "Electric Counterpoint"), we never sued them. Years passed and then there was the Reich Remixed album. And all these people volunteered the rights to me. Basically, it wasn't my music; it was their music, but I was the beneficiary of it, so it all works itself out in the end. I wouldn't get all hot and bothered about this in a negative way at all. In fact, I got a kick out of it, and I enjoyed the track. You picked a provocative one that was a very good choice. I hadn't heard it, I'm glad I have heard it.

Your own use of sampling is different in that you only use sounds that you've recorded yourself.

I'm not interested in sampling music. I'm interested in sampling things that are non-musical and bringing them into the music, so I never have that problem. I'm interested in bringing the world, as in *City Life* and as in *The Cave*, into the concert hall and the opera house. My attitude to sampling? I see it as sort of folk music of our time. So this Japanese DJ is sampling music around him and then arranging it. People were taking other people's music and rearranging it in the late 1960s. "Homme Armé" was an extremely popular folk tune and composers from Dufay all the way up to Palestrina—this is 200 years—all wrote masses for the church, hidden away inside of which was "L'Homme Armé." (Reich sings the melody.) A really good solid tune. As a matter of fact, in *You Are (Variations)*, squirmed away inside of the third variation is "L'Homme Armé." Yeah, I put it in the programme notes: nice culpa. If that guy still had a copyright, man, he'd even be making as much money as James Brown [laughs]. Anyway, Susumu Yokota, I enjoyed your music.

CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE DUO STRUMMING FOR TWO HARPSCHORDS: THREE EXERPTS (1978) FROM CONTINUOUS SOUND FORMS (JULIA MARGRINE 1978)

[After a while] This guy's got an idle fix. Charlemagne Palestine?

Yes it is. He is one of your contemporaries.

I heard Charlemagne give a lot of performances and I remember [they] were called Strumming Music. [Strumming of harpschord strings comes in after lengthy repetition of two chords] Here we go, see, at least not like picking the strings here. We go on to wait a long time for something to come in and give us a significant change. Repetition for me would start out as repetition, but then something would change. You'd have to hang in there for as much as a minute, tops, before the change came in. At first we were just rhythmic with a tremolo. Oh, here we go—some rhythmic variations. I think pieces like this are more dramatic in performance. He was a good performer and the energy that he put into it would be transmuted and make it a lot more interesting than in a recording.

It's not really using the 'M' word, but...

Go right ahead, you're a journalist, you're entitled. What about minimalism?

He's still doing a similar type of music now, rigorous and very minimal. Your own work has gradually expanded from pieces as pared down as Pendulum Music or Music For Pieces Of Wood to the large ensemble arrangements of your most recent recording, *You Are (Variations)*. How easy was it to develop your music, while sticking to a consistent aesthetic?

Well, you see, there were never any manifests. When I wrote the essay, "Music As A Gradual Process" in 1968, I was looking back at what I'd already done and trying to understand it better. It was in no way a manifesto about what I was going to do in the future and I never had an attitude that I am a card-carrying minimalist or anything else—I think that's absurd. I was doing what felt exciting and musically irresistible and one of the turning points was the end of *Drumming*. I had been doing music only for multiples of the same instrument, so I could get this interlocking web so you can't tell who's playing what; it's just a bunch of mambas, or it's just four panos, or it's electric organs, or it's just multiple violins. When I got to the end of *Drumming*, there were three glockenspiels, three mambas, a line of bongo drums, two singers and a piccolo player. So here I was, a Westerner, I felt obliged to put this stuff together. That was the beginning of going back to traditional orchestration. And then as you know, *Music For Mallet Instruments, Voices And Organ* is introducing some harmonic movement and that leads to *Music For 18 Musicians*, which completely blows it all wide open. I did an interview with Michael Neman, who in those days was more writing about music than writing music, and he asked me, "So you're not interested in minimal music?" I said, "No, I'm interested in music. I'm interested in doing the next thing that I want to do."

LAURIE ANDERSON "LANGUAGE IS A VIRUS FROM OUTER SPACE" — WILLIAM S BURROUGHS FROM UNITED STATES (JAY WARNER BROTHERS 1984)

Sounds like Laurie Anderson. Nice. Have you seen any of her performances? Oh sure. We've been on benefits together. We know each other. This is "Language Is A Virus", which is the name of the album, right? This is actually from United States *Parts I-IV*, recorded live in 1984.

Oh sure, back then that I saw that work when it was a long haul. It got a little much for me when I saw the two rights together. What we've just heard is great and I love her storytelling. There was a recent piece that she did about [Herman] Melville [Moby Dick] and that had a scene where she was in a huge chair. The image stuck in my head. What I like about her performances is that she has an incredible way of telling a story. She's certainly not a rap artist, but it partakes of the same phenomena, of being able to tell your story, the timing of voice, through the unusual choice of words and interrupting the story with music and the use of her voice. **Your music might have had an influence on her, but did her performance pieces in the 80s have any effect on your music theatre pieces?**

No, no, no, no. If you know Beryl [Korot]'s previous work in galleries and museums, she was one of the pioneers of multi-channel installations. So basically *The Cave* is taking a multi-channel video installation, putting it into a theatre and surrounding it with the musicians. Her pieces were always kinda long, so very often in museums people would come in take a look and go, and she'd think, "Gee, I wish they'd stay for the whole piece." And so, when we were discussing *The Cave*, I said, "You'll finally get an audience that's captive, that's going to go through

two and a half hours from beginning to end." So that's where that came from.

VARIOUS

"WAZA"
FROM BLUE NILE — SUDAN MUSIC COLLECTION
BERLIN/ENERGIC 1983/9

We're in Africa. We're in Central Africa, I think. Multiple horns. This is great.

This comes from Sudan.

Could be from southern Sudan. This is very, very similar to music from Central Africa, which the French musicologist Simha Arom has transcribed and he took a lot of multiple horn hocketing stuff, gags each playing a one-note horn.

Tell me about your drumming studies at the University of Accra in Ghana.

I actually studied with The Ghana Dance Ensemble who were in residence at the university, but my lessons were usually in the courtyards outside during their breaks. There's no music like this in Ghana. It's primarily drumming and some xylophone music from the tribes in the North. I was studying with the Ewe tribe who were actually from Topog, but were living in Ghana and I was studying a little Ashanti music. They are the predominant ruling tribe. What I played in Ghana was what was played when somebody died, the anniversary of their death, when somebody got married, when somebody got born and when there was a new chief installed. Music was part of life and just when I went there and [President] Nkrumah came in with the beginnings of a Western-style government, and this was when the local chiefs lost their wallets, so to speak, and all that money floated to the capital and the best musicians had two choices: either stay at home and work in the chocolate factories, have a day gig and fulfil your normal function as part of society, or try to get a gig with the Ghana Dance Ensemble and tour the world. If what you played me is the real stuff, it's the real stuff still there? Gee, I don't know, but it's magnificent. It's unique and these recordings are like museum pieces.

Was it difficult to learn a completely different drum style to the one you were used to when you were in Ghana?

The first thing I encountered was a book, *Studies In African Music* by AM Jones, who was a British cleric who lived in what was then called Rhodesia and then went to Ghana. He wanted to be able to write this stuff down and he invited me to be a waster drummer. Desmond Tay, to come to the School of Oriental and African Studies [at the University of London]. He rigged up a machine almost like a carologram, with a moving sheet of graph paper and two metal pens and he, Jones, would tap out this bell pattern, which was constant in African music [Reich demonstrates]. Desmond Tay would play each of the individual drum parts against what Jones was playing. So what Jones ended up with was a graphic representation of each part, which he then transcribed—[they were the] first Western transcriptions that you could see in a music book. But to answer your question, yeah, it was hard to do, because basically your downbeat is not the same downbeat as the guy sitting next to you so you're really got to relate to that bell and almost, as a Westerner, shut out for a while the guy playing next to you as he's putting you somewhere else you didn't want to be. I recorded the lessons on a little three-speed tape recorder, which I'd slow it down when I listened to it later. Finally, after three or four times, I'd get it right and I had it all on tape, the mistakes with the correct stuff. Then I'd slow it down and make transcriptions of what I learned principally a piece called "Gahu", which is a good time, "get drunk and enjoy yourself" kind of dance. So yes, it was a totally different world.

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KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN KONTAKTE (EDIT)

FROM CD: THE EARLY COURUS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC
(1948-1980) (ELLIPSIS ARTS) 1999-00

From Africa to electronics [room doorbell rings]. Even more electronics. This is what we used to call, when I was a student, 'Bloop-bleep music'. I have no idea what this piece is. Is it an early Varèse electronic piece? It's Stockhausen's *Kontakte*, recorded in 1997 with James Tenney on piano and William Winant on percussion.

Really? Well, I never did pay much attention to that. It definitely was the other side of the coin. This is the sort of music I had to grit my teeth and get through. When I went to music school, late 50s through 63 when I got my MA, this was all you could do. You could sound like Boulez, Cage, Stockhausen, Bono, etc. or get laughed at. Fortunately, I ended up studying with Luciano Berio, who was more musical than many of the others, and also very, very generous in his attitude. He loved to hear John Coltrane, too. The pieces of Stockhausen that I did actually enjoy were *Gesang Der Jünglinge*. It was on a record with *Electronic Studies*, which was just sine-wave generators, and there was *Gesang Der Jünglinge*, which was electronics with the voice. I thought, the voice is what's making this piece come alive. It was one of the many things, along with some of Berio's electronic stuff with voice, that made me feel that I wanted to work with voice, that opened the door, eventually, to *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*. But this kind of stuff - I think it's as

ugly today as it was then. It seemed to me: why on earth do this? I don't care about your theories of rhythm becoming pitch, or harmony coming to an end; I don't believe that anyway. I think that Schoenberg was wrong and Debussy was right. I just think it was a big mistake. Stockhausen is maybe a genius of sorts, but one of those people whose music I don't have any desire to hear whatsoever.

PAN SONIC

"JOHTO 2"

FROM A BLAST FIRST 1996

I like it, there's a kind of humour and darkness and musicality all running at the same time.

It's Pan Sonic from Finland. They used to be called *Panasonic*.

Oh, can't do that. Big time lawyers [laughs]. The less said the better.

This is a Techno hybrid that might have been influenced by your music.

Well, you know, it ought to be said, it ain't what you do, it's how you do it. That's my firm belief. And these guys, so far, I don't know how the CD would bear up, they've got something and they're developing it and they're having fun with it. Is this a PowerBook group?

This would have been circuit manipulation.

So this is back in the 90s? Dials and patchboards.

Have they come to London to perform?

I've seen them once. The sub-bass notes were quite disturbing live.

I could see if you had this cranked up on gigantic

speakers it could shake the floor. They really are heavy on the low end.

Does this sort of music interest you?

After City Life was done, I got a card from Germany from some guy and the whole card was [based on speech sample in the piece] 'Can't take no more. Take no, Techno' [laughs]. So I think a lot of these guys did hear the early pieces, but they've probably listened to Stockhausen, too, and took a totally different direction. I drove from New York to Vermont because we have a house up there. It's about a five and a half hour drive, and part of the drive goes past a whole bunch of colleges near Amherst, Massachusetts. I usually put the radio on, pick up a college station. I came into the zone and when the radio came in, there was some kind of electronics, and it was interesting. And it kept going and going until I went out of range. It was about 25 minutes and I was going 75 miles an hour. The thought crossed my mind that I could imagine, some time in the not too distant future, young men and women with musical talent and a flair for technology, maybe having gone to music school, maybe not having gone to music school, choosing the avant garde electronic world as opposed to the composer's world. The classical music world is really in disarray. There's a lot of serious problems with orchestras and even in chamber music, so I can imagine a young person thinking, "How am I going to make a living?" One of the things that they can do is to get involved in this area. This is interesting. It's not knocking me off my feet, but it's worth a listen, and I'm glad you played it for me. □

EARTHSHIFTERS

Since reforming Earth, once the missing link between Black Sabbath and La Monte Young, Dylan Carlson has added cosmic Country elements to their seismic, pulsing timbres to thwart revisionist views of America. Words: Edwin Pouncey. Photography: Bohdan Cap

At some ungodly hour on a Saturday night/Sunday morning at a venue called Noko in North London, the legendary Seattle trio Earth shuffle onto the stage and studiously begin to tune up for their 40 minute contribution to All Tomorrow's Parties' Easy To Swallow showcase. Given that most of the audience are here to see electronic duo Autolux, the appearance of Earth-guitarist Dylan Carlson, drummer Adrienne Davies and bass player James Hinkins – must be both frustrating and perplexing for anyone expecting a little laptop action. Ignoring calls to "geronowith!" from the heaving crowd below them, Earth launch into the introduction to their much maligned fourth studio album *Pentastar: In The Style Of Demons* (1996), which sounds like it weighs a thousand tons as it slowly erupts from their amplifiers and flows like lava across the dance floor. Gradually mesmerised by the narcotic beauty and sulken heft of its massive power drone, the crowd begin to sway in time to its elongated beat like a basket of cobras. Once they get into their stride with material from their new album *Hec: Or Pining In The Infernal Method*, Earth's cavernous, all-consuming sound generates an infectious slow-mo drive that causes every head to nod in unison.

For all the all-consuming impact of Earth's drone-induced power surges, the way their glacial pace stretches time eventually reveals the spaces and chiming dissonances that hold their songs together. "There would be a song where I'd hit a dissonant note and there'd be a vibration," explains Carlson before their concert. "I would count the number of vibrations and go to the next part. It was like listening to that and hearing what was going on in the upper registers of that kind of music. A lot of people think that the drone in music is just making a noise, but there's actually a structure to it that evolves out of the overtone series."

The more obvious origins of Carlson's ideas might be traced alongside groups like Black Sabbath and

contemporary drone rockers The Melvins, but he's keen to point out that his understanding of music goes deeper than a thorough knowledge of Black Sabbath's *Master Of Reality* album. His appreciation of the drone dominating Earth's early work is the result of studying the techniques of such minimalist masters as La Monte Young and Terry Riley. "I heard Terry Riley's *Parsons Sundry Derivatives* on the French label, Shandar," he recalls, almost shyly. "Then I got La Monte Young's *The Well-Tuned Piano* boxed set and *The Second Dream Of The High-Tension Line Strepdown Transformer* that Gramavision put out. At the same time I was listening to early Ted Nugent stuff like "Hibernation" or "Stranglehold", where he's using feedback and really repetitive riffs, and wanting it to be more. I started thinking that if somebody took those hard rock riffs and played them like La Monte Young, then something cool would happen."

"La Monte Young wrote some technical articles where I read about the false harmonic that's generated from the vibration of the ear," he continues. "Before I started playing with anybody, I took a guitar and tuned it to open strings. I was training myself to hear the overtone series and combining that with a rock or Metal aesthetic."

Dating back to 1990, these experiments using Young's harmonic theories and methods became the basic blueprint for early Earth units, when Carlson teamed up with bass players Dave Harwell and Joe Preston (who doubled up on percussion). When they uncoupled their application of Young's theories from the group's drone Metal core, their audience proved less tolerant. On *Pentastar*, Carlson essayed an experimental piano solo called "Sonar And Depth Charge". He perceived it as a genuine attempt to enlarge his own ideas about instrumentation and space, but many critics dismissed it as mere filler.

"A lot of people couldn't understand what "Sonar And Depth Charge" was doing on this rock album," he

sighs. "That was the first time I'd been in a studio that had a piano, so I thought I would try and do something with it. Unfortunately, it wasn't a grand piano – it was an upright with a broken keyboard – so it was a somewhat failed experiment," he admits. "One of the reviews said that I had scared myself and had retreated into making rock records," he laughs. "So many people reacted badly towards *Pentastar* like, Oh, he's making rock music now! Like that's such a horrible thing."

Before Earth got to make *Pentastar*, however, Carlson's wild and erratic behaviour had already provoked his label Sub Pop to pull the plug twice on sessions while he attempted to lay down the tracks for the more experimentally edged *Phase 3: Thrones And Dominions* (1995), which Carlson today considers among his best recordings. His deteriorating relationship with the label delayed the album's release by over a year. "Nothing I do is going to be a pure genre record," remarks Carlson, regarding the drug-fuelled electro odyssey that spawned *Phase 3*. "It's going to be slow and have repetition, but every album I record will have something that will expand the music and help it grow. There are certain things I can't stop doing, because that's how my psyche's organised. No matter what I do, it's always going to be Earth."

Long before the events that caused both *Pentastar* and his private life to come crashing down, Earth's underground reputation had developed partly as a result of Carlson's longstanding friendship with Kurt Cobain, who committed suicide in 1994. Indeed, Carlson appears in the Nick Broomfield film *Kurt & Courtney*. Before Cobain's rise to stardom with Nirvana, the two friends constantly shared musical ideas, dating back to the pre-90s proto-grunge era, before Cobain became famous.

"When we lived in Olympia together, we did this weird noise collage thing with a bunch of old synths,"



Earth (left to right): Jonas Mekas, Adriano Davis, Dylan Carlson

Carlson recalls. "Then we started playing music with John [who was later in Blind Melé]. She played guitar and vocals, I played bass and Kurt played drums. We'd both gotten turned on to The Gang Of Four around then, so we were playing angular post punk. They weren't things that we were planning to pursue full time. It was just stuff we did together when he wasn't doing his thing."

Cobain and Carlson worked together on the first Earth recordings (partly released as bonus tracks on No Quarter's reissue of the 1995 *Bliss* first CD *Sum Arms And Smashed Guitars Live*, which featured Cobain and October's Kelly Canyon on vocals. Recorded at Mike Lastra's Smeagol Studios in Portland, Oregon, in October 1999, the sessions gave Carlson an opportunity to work outside of the usual rigid rock orthodoxy.

"He [Cobain] sings the lead vocal on 'Ovine And Bright,'" says Carlson. "I felt that his voice would be better for that song because it's a sort of pop song. But for 'A Bureaucratic Ooze For Revenge', I wanted different vocal textures. My voice was a monotone, his was a gravelly pop vocal and Kelly made cougar howls. I wanted to prevent it from becoming a straight pop song."

The Lastra sessions – not to mention Cobain's involvement – led to Seattle independent label Sub Pop offering Earth a deal. Originally planned (but later scrapped) for release on the label's ongoing Singles Club series, "A Bureaucratic Ooze For Revenge" – together with another Carlson original "Ouroboros Is Broken" – emerged on Sub Pop as a CD called *Extra-Capsular Extraction* (1999). But it was Earth's next record that cemented their reputation and gave birth to the then embryonic drone/stoner rock movement.

Carlson's relationship with Sub Pop was tempestuous and unpredictable, largely due to his problems with drugs, which he readily admits were unacceptable. But on a creative level he found an ally in Bruce Pavitt, who, along with Jonathon Poneman, had founded the label. Carlson propositioned Pavitt about the next Earth project, explaining that he wanted to make as extreme a statement as possible. "We'd talk to Bruce about how much we could fit onto a CD, which was about 73 minutes," recalls Carlson. "Unfortunately, you could only get 15 to 30 minutes on tape, then you had to string it all together."

Now stripped down to just Carlson on guitar and Carlson on bass, the resulting *Earth 2: Social Low Frequency Versus* (1999) sent out a low-level rock reverberation of seismic proportions, where Carlson's original concept of incorporating Sabbath-style riffs into La Monte Young's harmonic extensions was finally realized. Misunderstood or ignored at the time, *Earth 2* gradually secured a cult following that later spawned such units as Sleep, Bore and Sunn O))), the latter claiming to be an Earth tribute band.

"We were just three guys getting together, getting pretty stoned and playing Earth riffs for fun at really loud frequencies in the practice space we shared," confesses Southern Lord label boss and Sunn O))) member Greg Anderson (who has since signed Earth to a two album deal). "Then we eventually morphed into our own thing, and although Sunn O))) have since branched out into a new direction, Earth remain a huge influence on the band."

Anderson agrees about the impact of *Earth 2* on the current drone rock scene, especially after he was given access to the original master tape, when Sunn O))) were invited to contribute to an album of Earth riffs – alongside Jim O'Rourke, Mogwai, Russell

Haswell, Justin Broadrick and Autechre – called *Legacy Of Dissolution*.

"There's stuff on the *Earth 2* master tapes that no one's heard before, because the released record was this mammoth fuzzed-out piece," Anderson reveals excitedly. "We spent hours just sitting there, soloing and isolating tracks and listening to what was going on. It gave us a whole new insight into that record. It was like taking a secret peek. There's actually a drum machine on there that was on the original track that they used as a timing guide, like a metronome. What also blew us away is that, there's a guitar on there that is really reminiscent of the stark, beautiful, clean tone Dylan is playing now."

The title of the Earth riffs album cites an ongoing series of instrumental pieces that Carlson refers to as "Ossolulations". The first of these was recorded way back at the Mike Lastra sessions, which Carlson now describes as being "like the sound of stuff falling apart. They haven't consciously been written as a series," he insists, attempting to explain the process. "A song might somehow evoke or become a facet of that original theme and it then becomes a new dissolution. There might or might not be another one, depending on what might happen in between."

The most recent dissolution was recorded during their 2002 East Coast Tour in New York City, on an extended guitar and drum slugfest where the central theme repeatedly dips and soars before entering crash and burn made a full hour later. The results were released as *Living In The Gleam Of An Unsheathed Sword* by Troubadour Records, a title that suggests the shows were somewhat gladiatorial. "That record is made up out of the two shows that were recorded," Carlson laughs. "I like the idea of a live recording being a snapshot of the event with no overdubbing to make it sound more epic."

"We had these shows coming up and I'd just started performing again," he continues. "It was like, what are we going to do? Well, we've got this riff, so let's just go for it. There were nights when we were really on the ball, and others where we were falling apart."

Another example is "Ossolulation II: Miami Coming Out (You Fuck)", which Carlson recorded for the Ash International compilation, *Scatter*, after disbanding Earth in 1997. It turned out to be his last public performance before going into limbo, but imbued within the familiar fuzzed-out leader guitar drone gitters a sonic and that at the subtle change in direction he would take eight years later when Earth returned with *Hex*. From the cooing of blurred, repeated riffing of "Miami", a more complex, Ennio Morricone anthem emerges. It's at once separate from the rest of the song yet undeniably part of it. "I've always wanted to do music for films," confesses Carlson. "I hope it happens one day. For me, real film music creates a whole gestalt where the song allows you to enter another universe. It becomes a complete entity that surrounds you. I especially think that the new album has a very filmic quality to it."

Signed to a record label that cares about their music and welfare, Earth are now back on track with a brand new studio album out on the streets. Carlson, meanwhile, continues to muse over the direction he sees his music heading. "I started listening to a lot of instrumental music by people like Quane Eddy, back when instrumental music was a commercial dominant force," he responds, when asked about what influenced the songs on *Hex*. "I also started listening to the drone in Country And Western music – in the

way that they sing, how the banter rolls and there's always that open space. There's still the whole sense of the drone being present, playing against the note. As I've learned more about playing the guitar, I think Country guitar players are some of the best there are. I wanted to learn some of their styles and apply it to what I do with my music."

"Gram Parsons had this thing, 'the cosmic American music', and that's how I kind of viewed it," he continues. "There is so much bullshit that has become identified with America, the revisionist history of America and how America views itself that I just wanted to express what America meant to me."

Another element that has filtered into Hex is Cormac McCarthy's lyrical western novel *Blood Meridian*: On The Evening Whereas In The West, a violent and sometimes beautiful work of fiction for which Carlson has composed a memorably vivid and almost orchestral soundtrack. "I always envisioned Earth as being something other than guitar, bass and drums," he declares. "For the album I was planning before Sub Pop dropped me, I had booked a string and horn section. It was going to be a big production but then never happened. So Hex gave me the opportunity to do something like that, where we added trombone and pedal steel guitar to the regular line-up and marshaled some musical force."

A sense of foreboding and inherent evil pulse through the drones of Earth's latest excavation Hex. The sepia-toned photographs that adorn Stephen O'Malley's gatefold sleeve evoke this sense of strangeness still further. Carlson admits that the occult was another source of inspiration.

"Slim [Moon, former Earth member] once told me there was this theory that the American continent is evil and that all the bad stuff that's happened there has been a result of that," he says. "All of these people who came on the landscape that's forbidding and dark. The Pennsylvania Dutch were these God-fearing Mennonite people who came to America and had to put these crazy hex signs on their possessions to protect them from whatever evil forces exist in America. They had to break with their austere religious tradition and practise magic. I think an occult history of America has yet to be written."

Hex might seem far removed from Earth's early work, but turn it up and beneath the shimmering pedal steel playing and the sampled stampeding of no so pretty little horses, lies the group's ever present ambivalence. "I started listening to *Earth 2* and it just walked away mysteriously, but the true admirer of Carlson and his unique musical vision will be enthralled by his dramatic new direction. 'I'm glad that they didn't make *Earth 2* or *Pentastar* again," agrees Anderson. "That shit was a long time ago and I don't like bands who make the same record over and over again, that's boring to me and stale... I think people want to keep Oylan that way. They want to remember him in the Kurt & Courtney movie where he's not doing well at all. I think a lot of people want to keep him in that space and that's okay. It's fucked up."

But Carlson has never been one to rest on his laurels. On the face of it, his next project sounds as though he intends to explore the origin of his own music in more detail. "I'm into this thing right now where I'm actually contemplating adding acoustic sounds behind the electric textures," he expounds. "I also want to use space more. On a lot of the early Earth stuff the space is so full... just like the idea of listening to space, to the silences in between." □ Hex: Or Printing In The Infernal Method is released by Southern Lord



Clockwise from top left:
Dylan Carlson, Adreana Devine, Jonas Haskins

ONCE UPON A TIME IN SHINJUKU



In the second of an occasional series exploring significant musical sites around the globe, Alan Cummings revisits Tokyo's notorious pleasure district in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where guitarist Masayuki Takayanagi, saxophonist Kaoru Abe and writer/promoter Aquirax Aida thrashed out their free music manifestos against a backdrop of sleaze and political unrest. Photography: Yuji Itsumi



The sound is vast and violent, heaving electric-heavy in the music, enclosed as like a summer thunderstorm about to burst. Onstage the musicians abuse rather than caress their instruments. The drummer at the heart of the music is a blur of motion like a demonic blacksmith at his anvil, roaring insanely hard across the toms and cymbals, dredging deeply resonating bass drum airbursts. The bassist sazes away in armo mode, the bow flashing back and forth so quickly that you expect tendrils of smoke to rise from the strings. Sitting hunched over his instrument, the guitarist attacks his steel strings with a wooden sword and chains, ripping blinding sheets of churning distortion and whirling feedback from his overdriven amp. The music ebbs off the walls of the small room, a continuous series of explosive events that obliterate all signs of melody, harmony and rhythm. The result is pure heat and motion, a thrilling polyphonic racket with force enough to pin the listeners to their seats. Dislodged by the vibrations, tiny flecks of paint flake off the ceiling and drift down on the audience like snow. The year is 1989, the group is Masayuki Takayanagi And New Directions. The place, a tiny jazz coffee shop called Nagisa in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo.

Shinjuku in the 1960s was home to an unprecedented explosion of countercultural creative energy. This was the period of the economic miracle, when Japan rebounded from the devastation of defeat 20 years before to become the second largest economy in the world. Rising prosperity and a new consumer society were not enough, however, to paper over growing popular discontent with a corrupt and patrician political system, the Vietnam war and the renewal of a controversial US-Japan security treaty. Throughout 1968 and 1969, radical student sects barricaded university campuses across Japan. It took 1000 riot police two days, using water cannons, tear gas and finally hand to hand combat, to break the most famous occupation, at Tokyo University. On occasion, the conflict spilled over into the streets, and Shinjuku became one focus for anti-government demonstrations. During the summer of 1969, the east exit to Shinjuku Station, through which two million people passed every day, played home to anti-war concerts by the so-called 'folk guerrillas'. Attracting first hundreds, then thousands, of supporters, these gatherings were structured around polemical speeches and stirring anti-war songs.

Even before the 60s, Shinjuku was where modernity ran full tilt into the dangerous and disruptive energies of popular culture. Sexual exploitation and crime were deeply rooted in its mythos. In the 19th century, Shinjuku was a highway post station notorious for its hordes of unlicensed prostitutes dragging passengers off the road. A contemporary song makes deeply ironic reference to 'misses blooming so modestly, amid the horseshit of Shinjuku'. The area's localise clan provides the backdrop for what art critic Alexander Murray refers to as 'the most creative outburst of anarchic, subversive and riotous tendencies in the history of modern Japanese culture'.

The emerging waves of Shinjuku free jazz provided a perfect soundtrack for the avant garde's fusion of the personal and the political. Film director Masao

Adachi used a free jazz soundtrack (released under the title *Isolation*) by drummer Masahiko Togashi and tenorist Mototeru Takagi for his 1969 film, *Pentoku Shosatsuwa* (Serial Gunman). Four years later, Adachi flew to Palestine to join the Japanese Red Army. Such crossovers, hatched late at night over glasses of cheap whiskey in Shinjuku's drinking dens, were very much emblematic of the time. Dramatist/actor Juro Kara's red circus tent, pitched in the grounds of the Hamazono Shrine, was another symbol of Shinjuku's counterculture. Its anarchic, erotic energy was sometimes stolen by full-on free jazz sets by pianist Yosuke Yamashita's group.

Shinjuku was also ground zero for a nascent folk and rock scene. Street hippy turned acid rock genius JA Seazer vividly recalls the scene at all-night coffee houses like Pagestudio, the Village Vanguard and the Village Gate during the late 60s. "The Village Gate was my hangout," he said. "I wouldn't listen, I wouldn't talk, just sit there. It was a distant, meditative time when I'd give myself over to the flow of time. Or I'd go to the Vanguard when I wanted to talk – it had a more communal vibe. Late at night it would fill up with street people and wannabe artists. I remember the serial killer Norio Nagayama working there for a while and making me a plate of spaghetti." It was this ad hoc balance between the avant garde and the popular, hedonism and political activism that made late 60s Shinjuku such a creative crucible.

By the 1980s, jazz in Japan was ripe for a change. Accomplished guitarist Masayuki 'Jojo' Takayanagi was one of a handful of younger jazz musicians who began to push against the rigid restraints of orthodox swing, bop and modal jazz. Born in 1932 in Tokyo, Takayanagi dropped out of high school aged 18 to become a musician. Three years later, he turned pro. Paying his dues in jazz groups like the Ryosaburo Nishi Quintet, the Duddy Little Combo and Makio Sakuma Jokers Quintet, the young guitarist soon gained a reputation for his stunning technique and ability to sight-read any music put in front of him. Though his talent guaranteed him a comfortable career competing behind popular jazz singers, Takayanagi's musical restlessness led him to form a string of shortlived groups. In the early 50s he put together his first New Direction group, a radical (for the time) piano-less quartet that paralleled contemporary US developments by Teddy Charles and Gerry Mulligan. Later, in 1961 with Jazz Academy Quartet, he made his first break from the domination of jazz's rigid four beat to experiment with free tempo playing. The following year Takayanagi, bassist Hideto Kamae and pianist Isamu Kageyama went on to form an AACM-style musician's collective called New Century Music Research Workshop. Every Friday, members gathered at a Ginza dhabar bar called Gas-Pans, to push the outer limits of jazz creativity. Squares were quickly shown the door – when an established show drummer started playing a conventional rhythm one night, the rest of the musicians trooped off. Today, some of the collective's experimenters seem possessed of an overly cult-fetishistic stringless guitars, dealing out cards with random chords written on them to structure a tune, pieces based on the rhythm of Morse code, Rorschach inkblot tests used as graphic scores, and so on.

But the spirit of danger and the unexpected was a brief flash in the night on that 1989 jazz scene – at least until the Gin-Pans scene was dispersed after Takayanagi was imprisoned for a drugs offence. By all accounts, drug use was rampant on the Tokyo jazz scene, with some musicians even partaking on the dubious grounds of jazz authenticity. The authorities decided that someone had to be made an example of – and Takayanagi unluckily drew the short straw.

These early experiments properly came to fruition in 1968 and 1969 with the westward shift to Shinjuku. Established jazz coffee shops like Nagisa and Taro, and dedicated venues like P-Hill and New Jazz Hall provided spaces for experimentally minded jazz musicians whose music was shunned by the more orthodox clubs of the Ginza. A number of important groups took root in this period, such as Yosuke Yamashita's trio, bassist Mototeru Yoshizawa's group with free tenor player Mototeru Takagi, and units led by drummer Masahiko Togashi and Berkeley-trained pianist Masahiko Sato. Each incorporated freeform ideas and structures to varying degrees. But it was Takayanagi who made the biggest break with jazz convention. Incorporating elegant touches of feedback, his playing on Masahiko Togashi's Quartet's austere and impressionistic album *Live Now* (1969), recorded in May 1969, gave some indication of how far his thinking had progressed.

Takayanagi's collaboration with Togashi could have produced a real musical breakthrough, but tragically the drummer was sidelined by a spinal accident that left him paralysed from the chest down. He returned to playing in late 1971, but had already moved away from free abstraction.

In Togashi's absence, the New Directions trio that Takayanagi put together in August 1969 consisted of bassist Yoshizawa and a younger drummer named Yoshisaburo 'Sabo' Toyozumi. Toyozumi had just returned from two years playing hotel lounges across southeast Asia and European clubs as a member of huckster pop group Micky Curtis And The Samurais. Having seen Rashid Ali destroy his own time brushes over the space of just two songs on John Coltrane's 1956 dates in Tokyo, he was now ready to throw himself into free. New Directions rehearsed in a first floor walk-up nest door to a Shinjuku tempura restaurant. This room was the P-Hill's instrument storage locker, but by the mid-70s the city's history Teruo Soejima, author of *Motion Punt Jazz Shu* (*History Of Free Jazz In Japan*), negotiated to turn it as a dedicated free jazz venue, which he renamed the New Jazz Hall. It immediately became the premier venue for radical music in Tokyo, presenting such out there groups as Taj Mahal Travellers and New Music Ensemble, as well as poetry recitals and showings of experimental films by Kenneth Anger, Paul Sharits and young Japanese directors Takahiko Imura, Seichi Fuji and the mysteriously named Pynch Psychotherapy.

Throughout that sweltering August, Takayanagi, Yoshizawa and Toyozumi locked themselves away in this windowless space threatening out an entire new Japanese methodology for improvisation based on Takayanagi's theories about progressive art. During a recent visit to London, Toyozumi, the last surviving member of the original trio, recalls the certainty with which the guitarist presented his new ideas. "He



showed up at the rehearsal and laid down the rules," he says. "Big feelings, never repeat the same phrase and don't listen to what anyone else is doing. That was a staggering concept for us." At another rehearsal, Takayanagi showed up with scores where the bar lines were obliterated by thick black marker, instructing his musicians to "fill up all the space". The need for a decisive break with the past had become clearer than ever to him, if jazz was to escape its past and develop a relationship to its Japanese surroundings.

Recorded with Yoshizawa and Toyozumi at the Teichiku Kakan studios on 18 September 1969, Takayanagi's debut album as a leader, *Independence – Tread On Sure Ground*, is the first true classic of Japanese free jazz. The opening track "The Galactic System" demonstrates just how far they had developed over their month of rehearsals. An electric guitar string is pinged with a sour and markedly unlovely resonance. It is left to fade away naturally, its dying whisper replaced with a wailing feedback tone that grows steadily in volume and thickness. Against the slow feedback wave, a sudden, loud percussive crash, urgent staccato rolls across the toms, and the dry rasp of a rattle. A choppy, non-sequential series of chords from the guitar, still mouth-puckeringly bitter, is set against the warmer resonance of an alternately bowed and plucked double bass. Each instrument sounds self-contained, like lunar bodies spinning on their own axes at different tempos, but locked together by unfathomably complex rules of motion. The playing is exploratory and deliberate, technically adept and keenly judged. Its sense of focused concentration is more akin to the European free improvisation of AMM or The Spontaneous Music Ensemble than the violent ecstasies of American free music.

In his sleeve notes, Takayanagi declared plainly that, having spent the previous 38 years exhausting the possibilities of swing, pop and modal playing, he was now "tired of playing jazz within the constraints of harmony", and that notated bar lines could no longer constrain his music. Conventional beauty of tone held no attraction to him, hence his deployment of feedback and even kazoo on one track. Stubbornly unwilling to accept jazz as a predetermined form, he instead returned the focus to pure improvisation – no head melodies, no fixed rhythms, no harmonic structure. In their place, he developed two concepts: gradual projection and mass projection. In his notes for the second New Direction album *Free Form Suite*, he elaborated, "I created two fundamental playing modes, which I stubbornly continue to use and nurture. I refer to inaction and action, or more concretely 'gradual projection' and 'mass projection'. Through mixing and combination, these two modes possess limitless possibilities. To accompany this conceptual evolution, I also developed playing techniques, including the selection, discovery and invention of various new devices to interact with the strings." On *Independence* these include a butter knife and a bass bow, deployed to "prevent the tedious form of repetition and the stagnation of change".

The definitions of the two modes are deliberately vague, but from documented performances it appears that Mass Projection involves a dense, speedy and chaotic colouring in of space that destroys the

listener's perception of time, and thus of musical development. Gradual Projection apparently affords a greater amount of silence and thus an appreciation of the spatial arrangement of successive musical events within it.

A track on a compilation called *Guitar Workshop* from January 1970 and a pair of live albums from two months later (*Call In Question* and *Live Independence*, which add tenorist Mototeru Takagi to the already devastating sonic palette) demonstrate the increasing role that ear-bleeding volume came to play in Takayanagi's conception. Live they were defenestrating, Soejima remembers how Yoshizawa was forced to buy a huge bass amp in order to hear himself over Takayanagi's razor-edge feedback and distortion barrages. The critic once asked Takayanagi why the music had to be played so loud. The nonchalant reply: "The greater the amount of information you want to transmit, the more amplification you need." It is tempting to perceive a parallel between musical developments and the civil unrest in the streets of Tokyo in 1969. In a 1981 article, Takayanagi wrote, "Those who live in the present but who harbour no doubts about the structure of authority, about the extreme dangers of our society, including the estrangement of man and nature, those whose anger does not drive them to delve into the essentials, and those whose approach to their art raises no questions, all of these must renounce their status as artists." The parallel between the thrilling polyphonic blare of his music and the questioning of the structures of social control was thus made blindingly clear.

Takayanagi had a famous talent for burning his bridges in public – in Japan's close-knit jazz community, calling a spade a spade was rarely an option. But in the ferocious reviews and thinkpieces he penned for jazz magazines, he had no such qualms. He treated venal club owners and posing no-nothing fans alike to withering broadsides. Nor did he spare his fellow musicians. He got into an acrimonious public dispute with Yamashita after the pianist criticised Takayanagi's new music for lacking swing. Doubting the commitment of other musicians who jumped on the free jazz bandwagon, he criticised them as "a pack of the purely vain and frivolous chasing after money, money, money, just like all fire eaters, filthy parasites, no better than oonooches". By April his invective had brought an end to New Directions – Toyozumi and Takagi were stunned to find themselves summarily denounced as "self-preserving betrayers" in a concert poster. It also got him barred from virtually every jazz venue in the capital. A violent disagreement with the New Jazz Hall promoters meant that it too was off-limits.

Against the odds, Takayanagi managed to keep up the momentum with a new circle of collaborators. Primary among them were a young poet and jazz critic from Niigata called Akira (later he preferred the spelling *Akura*) Aida, and an even younger aloft from Kawasaki called Kaoru Abe.

Recently the subject of a lengthy documentary by Japanese director Shuji Aoyama, *Akura Aida* was a forceful presence on the Japanese free jazz scene of the 70s as a critic, producer and promoter. Through several posthumously published books, his ideas

Top: Akura Aida (right) with Derek Bailey
Middle: Kaoru Abe on the bank of Tanagawa River
Bottom left: Masahiko Toyooka (front, in chair),
Mototeru Yoshizawa, Sabu Toyozumi, Mototeru Takagi
Bottom right: Mototeru Takagi (left), Mototeru Yoshizawa



continue to resonate through today's Japanese underground. His activities as a promoter were extremely influential, first with a group he named Japan Real Jazz Ensemble (JRJE), which brought Kaoru Abe together with older voices like Takayanagi, Yoshizawa and, later, Taj Mahal Travellers leader Takahisa Koseki. In 1975 Aida founded a second organisation called Hangeisha, and succeeded in bringing Steve Lacy, Milford Graves and Derek Bailey to Japan. This encounter with Western free improvisation had a huge and lasting impact.

As a critic, Aida wrote about krautrock, punk and even French art song (he was largely responsible for the reputation that Brigitte Fontaine still has in Japan), but the bulk of his serious criticism was focused on free jazz and improvisation. Towards the end of his life, he published two issues of a magazine called *Mongie*, which combined the first serious journalism in Japan about European free improvisation. While a student, Aida had studied French literature, when he developed a taste for French critical theorists like Jacques Derrida and Maurice Blanchot, and poetic nihilists like Arthur Rimbaud and Louis-Ferdinand Céline. Aida often quoted the latter on his concert and record productions (two Abe albums bear the Céline titles *Mort d'Orphée* and *Alceste*). Like his literary heroes, Aida's prose could be at once baroque, complex and poetically devastating.

Always pointedly subjective, he importantly provided both a sense of independence and a reasoned justification for Japanese free jazz, sometimes culled in an appealing romanticism that verged on mysticism. When talking about Abe, for example, he theorised about "a mode of performance that could explode the moment, thus freeing humanity from the bonds of existence". Aida's dreams were of "reaching an extremity of radicalism and speed beyond the possible". In later years he moved away from the extremity of this position, coming to see a mystical wholeness in improvisation that transcended technique and genre to become an almost religious discipline by which one could live one's life.

If one player in the Japanese underground embodied both of these strands of Aida's jazz theory, it was Kaoru Abe. Japan's handful of free musicians of the early 70s had all come up through the capital's conventional jazz scene. Abe was something else entirely. He had very little to do with jazz – despite his bold declaration that he was the bastard child of Billie Holiday and Eric Dolphy. Entirely self-taught, he had played his first gig in Kawasaki in 1968, aged 19. The following year he was "discovered" by Sabu Toyozumi and trumpeter Itaru Oki, who had heard rumours about the phenomenal young alto player. Toyozumi recalls that Abe's style was already well established before he reached Tokyo – abrasively cold, hard, aggressively serene, rooted in the physical. His sound seemed to have come out of nowhere. It was sharpened not through the normal discipline of playing with other musicians, but through strength of determination alone. The story circulated that Abe practised on the bare shoulder of a Tokyo expressway, lowering over the constant roar of the traffic. His predilection for rehearsing on the banks of the Tama-gawa River once led an aged boatman to call the cops, convinced that someone was being murdered. In radical exploitation

director Koji Wakamatsu's 1978 film *Juwanin Ranzoku Bokura* (Invader 1.5), the same riverbank provided the setting for a fleeting encounter between an enigmatic saxophonist (played by Abe, who also scored the film) and a corpulent mass-murderer/rapist. Some two decades after the saxophonist's death, Wakamatsu made the Abe bio pic, *Endless Waltz*.

Both films present Abe as a cipher, getting no closer to revealing a rationale for his music than the saxophonist's own pronouncements in jazz magazines. When asked about his musical concerns in a 1970 interview for *Savoy Journal*, he replied, "Sound that stops the capacity for judgement. Sound that never decays. Sound that breaks free from every possible image. Sound that comes from both death and birth. Sound that dies. The sound around me. Sound like the symptoms of eternal cold turkey. Sound that resists private ownership. Sound that goes insane. Sound that spills over from the cosmos. The sound of sound."

Abe treated speed and extremity as expressive forms in themselves. He had a correspondingly gluttonous appetite for booze and pills. "I want to become faster than anyone," he once said, "in what reads like a manifesto for self-destruction. 'Faster than cold, than man alone, than the earth, than Andromeda. Where, where is the crime?'"

Soon after his discovery, Abe secured a weekly Friday slot at the New Jazz Hall. Word of mouth spread amazingly quickly, and the speedfreak acceleration and heedless frenzy of his playing rapidly gained him rabid fans. If many musicians were tempted into collaborations with the wunderkind, most came away badly bruised. After slugfests with Abe, tenorist Mototeru Takagi commented that "that wasn't music", while trumpeter Toshihiko Kondo stated "Abe's playing is only about how far he can expand his own ego".

Abe's confrontational attitude meant that for most of his short career he played solo, *Kagayakuu Mitata* (Glimmering Perseverance) and *Mokuyoku No Yoru* (Thursday Night) on PSF catch some of the quicksilver brilliance of his early 70s sound. But the later 10-CD *Live At Gaya* series on DW, recorded in 1978 at a small club in the shadow of the skyscrapers of west Shinjuku, reveal his slow decline. If one performance context suited him, it was in duo with drummers. During one such set with Toyozumi, however, Abe's alto characteristically soared off on its own, leaving the drummer flailing in his wake. When Toyozumi asked him if he even cared that there was someone else on stage, Abe just smiled mischievously in response. Yet in his last years he played frequently with Toyozumi, as documented on albums like *Overhang Party* (AUM) and *Senzu* (Qboro).

One drummer with whom Abe refused to gel, recalls Toyozumi, was the great American free jazz musician Milford Graves. Aida had brought Graves over to Japan to tour and record an album in the summer of 1977, the year before Abe died. A group of Japanese free jazz luminaries was put together to tour with Graves, including Kondo, Takagi, drummer Toshiyuki Tsuchino and Abe. Abe apparently took an immediate dislike to Graves's huge self-belief and freely playing. At one concert, he positioned himself in front of Graves's kit and bounced up and down directing a stream of also ineffectual straight at him. Graves stopped playing and demanded that Abe be dropped from the tour. After

protracted negotiations, Graves was placated by the promise that he would stand on stage the next night. Abe was indeed absent from the stage, but at the end of the gig he suddenly appeared in the wings. "I'd never heard such an astonishingly heart-breaking tone on the saxophone," recalls Toyozumi. "It gave me goosebumps and I was literally on the verge of tears. I'd never been touched emotionally like that by free jazz either before or since."

There was one musician in Japan who would go to kill in the face of Abe's onslaught: Masayuki Takayanagi. In May 1970, Aida set up a showdown between the two firebrands. On the surface Abe's "take no prisoners" attitude was highly compatible with Takayanagi's *Mass Projection* concept, particularly the instruction about not listening to anyone else on stage. The ferocious four and a half hour, no holds barred tussle of their first encounter has entered Japanese free jazz legend. "It was one of the most wonderful, gloriously vivid nights I have ever known," shapedosed Aida, "both of them at the absolute highest pitch of voltage, of speed, of violence, four and a half hours without the slightest loss in tension." When Abe's face turned purple, it seemed that the music would go on until one or both dropped dead from exhaustion. Or, in this case, until the expanded club owner pulled the plugs. An early show at Shinjuku's Kosenenkin Hall, promoted by Aida under the title *Kataiteki Kokan – Jazu No Shimeitsu E No Tasha* (Deconstructive Communication – A Projection Towards The Annihilation Of Jazz), was rescheduled on CD a couple of years ago as *Kataiteki Kokan*. The razor edge, top of the reel screaming and aggressive phrasing of Abe's alto whips Takayanagi into a frenzy of feedback-laden motion. Even in its edited form it is an exhausting listen. But not all their encounters were so merciless. Gradually *Projection* (DW), an unedited disc from July 1970, provides a glimpse of the less well-documented parts of their set, where Abe also played basic classical, shakuhachi or harmonica, and Takayanagi took up his acoustic. Takayanagi and Abe played regularly until October when the duo finally burned itself out. As Aida tells it, Abe constantly baited the older guitarist to take the music further out. It was Takayanagi who bailed out first.

Abe's urgent, lonely journey to the end of consciousness continued for just another eight years. He trekked back and forth across the country, playing solo in the handful of jazz coffee shops that would have him, adding piano, guitar and drums to his armory. He died of a ruptured stomach on 9 September 1978, after taking 67 tablets of the sedative bromazin. His champion Aida himself was not much longer for the world, suddenly collapsing from a fatal cerebral haemorrhage on 12 December the same year. Takayanagi may have bailed at the path taken by Abe, but he continued to explore his own radical theories with new line-ups of New Directions. Towards the end of his life, his two favourite playing contexts were the remarkable solo noise guitar style he called *Action Direct*, and a beautiful Latin guitar ensemble *Loco Takayanagi* Y Los Pobres. He died of liver failure on 23 June 1991. □ Special thanks to Sabu Toyozumi, Hideo Ikezumi, Tatsuo Minami, Yui Isurugi and the Japan Music Support Association for their help with this feature



THE SINGER NOT THE SONG

In the age of the composer and the singer-songwriter, cover versions are often read as signs of creative bankruptcy. Yet music is an organic process, with new songs being constantly hatched out of old ones, and cover versions have often served as playpen and laboratory for some of music's most radical experiments with existing forms. Over the next 12 pages, *The Wire's* crack writing squad select 60 cover versions that rattle the state of song. Plus, opposite, Alan Licht investigates his motives for covering other artists' work



From reverent paean to total deconstruction, Alan Licht offers a personal view on the motivations that make musicians take on the cover version

In the post-Beatles era of recording entire albums of original material, cover versions take on a heightened significance — they call attention to themselves in a way they didn't when they still comprised half or more of an album. In the post-punk era, some DIY-ers bypassed the tradition of learning to play by learning other people's songs before writing their own. Such a defiant attitude could make covers seem either retro or conservative in comparison to their year zero outlook, but there's much to be said for them. They can be love notes passed from one musician to another; they also reveal the music fan in every performer worth listening to, which makes them a sure-fire way to bond with their fans.

There's a few decent ways to go about it; the noble gesture of covering an obscure, worthy song, simultaneously making it your own and bringing it (and sometimes the original performer/writer) to a wider audience (Joan Jett's cover of The Arrows' obscure glam number "I Love Rock 'N' Roll" comes to mind), or miming similarities in vocal timbre to acknowledge a kindred spirit (Ron House singing The Electric Eels' "Giganto" with The Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments is a fine example). Covers can also be used as a weapon in a positive way (as sung by Josephine Wiggs, The Breeders' version of Aerosmith's "Lord Of The Thighs" did as much to upend 1970s and 80s cock rock as anything in the grunge era; The Pink Fairies' "Hawaii rendition of The Ventures' "Walk Don't Run" made good on Jimi Hendrix's promise of never listening to surf music again). Best of all is re-imagining an already great song into another version with all your might (Patti Smith's visionary retelling of Them's "Gloria"; John Coltrane's tranced out excursions on "My Favorite Things"). I have tried to keep all of these in mind as I've done covers both on my own and with various groups over the years.

I got off to an early start in 1990 with Love Child's second release, a 7" single called *Love Child Plays Moondog*, recorded at home on a four-track. Forced Exposure, still a mediocre label back then, had commissioned us to do it. Neither Love Child bassist Rebecca Odes nor myself had heard Moondog, but they sent a tape of Moondog 2, an album of rounds, and we loved it. It was sharp thinking on their part; like Love Child, the Moondog album featured child-like vocals, and balanced musical sophistry and simplicity. Plus, everything clocked in between one and three minutes, much like our songs did back then. But "All Is Loneliness" was stretched to nearly seven minutes as a peach guitar jam inspired largely by Spacejam 3's live take of The 13th Floor Elevators' "Ridecoaster" — the canon and the 5/8 metre went out the window and we concentrated on the fuzz guitars, with a cheap Casio winding in and out of the mix. For "I Love You", we replaced the odd-

metred bongos with a driving loop made by tipping the mic (there were no drums on the record) in homage to Martin Rev's rhythm box in Suicide, but retained the bass playing the melody and the round between the bass and the vocal, which we stumbled through endearingly. Overdubbing a second fuzz bass lent it a more sinister edge than the original. "Be A Hobo" featured Rebecca's sister Naomi on a vocal pitched an octave above hers; I fuzed the round by just setting the delay pedal as I played the melody on guitar. We retitled "Nero's Expedition Up The Nile" as "Oren's Expedition", because we had recorded it and played the tape backwards. I still find this EP charming. Forced Exposure's Byron Coley was so pleased with the results that he envisioned a whole series of Love Child covering modern composers, but it never transpired.

Years later, my next group, a post-rock quartet called Run On who released a couple of albums on Matador, frequently covered Moondog's "Enough About Human Rights". In Coley island once we did a 30 minute version that comprised an entire set. It started off with all of us playing percussion instruments, building up a rhythm; then two guitars and bango would riff on the chords, while we split the vocal between Rick Brown, Sue Garner and myself. The tone became kind of an epic journey for us, one that's not really latent in the original, but the odd metre certainly fitted Rick's drum style, and we all liked the song. Run On did a lot of covers, from Nick Drake's "Rough" to The Pogues' "Boy Can I Dance Good" to Nina Simone's "Sinner Man", but I think our other peak cover was "Copper Kettle", from Bob Dylan's maligned 1970 album *Salt* Porrait, which largely consisted of covers. We stripped away all its overwhelming orchestration and just had Rick sing it with the organ holding a perfect-fifth drone. I've done something similar with The Who's "Baba O'Riley" at solo gigs, just letting the chords echo on the guitar to give it an intimate feel; I've also done a tape version where I extend the opening string passage to 15 minutes by looping each phrase.

Once, Love Child were asked to contribute a track to a Minutemen tribute compilation album. I envisioned doing a half hour version of "Polarity", by looping the final chord and processing it through a couple of delay pedals. There wasn't room on the record for such a long track, even in the digital era, and Love Child had broken up by that point, so I recorded it for a first solo guitar album, *Sink The Aging Process* (Silbreeze, 1994). "Polarity" was from Minutemen's 1983 LP *What Makes A Man Start Fires?*, the first indie rock album I ever bought, and I liked the idea of doing such a long version, since the song was known for the brevity of their songs. The Minutemen did some great covers themselves, including Steely Dan's "Doctor Wu" and Van Halen's "Am I Talking" "Bout Love", which proved groundbreaking in testing the boundaries of

acceptable tastes in punk circles, and I wanted to pay back their influence. Surely if it was OK to strip "Doctor Wu" to its barest essentials and cut its length in half, it was OK to skip to the last chord of "Polarity" and put it under the microscope for 20 minutes? Mike Watt, who wrote the song, was mystified by the decidedly Ambient-sounding track, when Thurston Moore played it to him, he supposedly exclaimed, "Thurston, I don't hear my tune!" But he's always told me he liked it.

A year or two later, Will Oldham asked me to open a few shows for him and I wanted to do something that was neither an avant guitar nor a singer-songwriter set. Run On's David Newgarden had played me a CD of hollenn' contests from North Carolina, so I went about coming up with chord progressions to play behind the recordings of the weird a cappella, howling melodies. As an addendum, I took another a cappella song, "Well" from Captain Beethoven's Trout Mask Replica, and developed chord changes behind that, turning it into a punk anthem that ended in a wailer of feedback. This can be heard on my 2001 CD *Plays Well* (Crank Automotive); one of the hollenn' contest tunes, "Lonesome Valley", is on the *Van Dando Df* noise? (Corpus Hermeticum, 1997). Opening for Oldham, I reharmonized everything — something I try to apply in a variety of contexts, especially in duo playing with Loren Mazzacane Connors and in many of my solo guitar pieces — and did a kind of inverse karaoke. Combining live instruments with prerecorded tape was something I always liked about music concrete. Phil Niblock's work and the story (reported in *The Wire* 132) about AMM playing *Over The Beach Boys* "Barbara Ann".

More recently I had the idea to cover Fredric Rzewski's *Coming Together* (Opus One LP, 1973). I broke it into three sections; in the first I followed the score for the verbal text, which came from a letter by Sam Melville, an inmate at Attica. Unlike the William Shatner-like histrionics of vocalist Steve Ben Israel on the 1973 recording, I affected a deliberately robotic voice to echo the numbing repetition of the lines, eventually giving way to a more somber tone as the text becomes more poignant. In the second part Marina Rosenfeld continued to play the piano part, as I followed different notes from the piece's mode over a prerecorded CD of my voice reciting precisely layered overlapping lines from the text. In the final part Marina manipulated a vinyl copy of Rzewski's original Opus One version, while I played the e-bowed notes back at half-speed with a Lane 6 sampler. Marina more accurately described it as a "meta version" rather than a cover version. The Opus One LP version is a favourite of mine, even with the original robotization; but I felt there was more to be explored, both musically and psychologically, with this brilliant work — which is as good a reason as any for doing a cover. □

"AMARCHY IN THE UK"

(COCUK/CHEN/WATLOK/ROTTEN) 1977

The Sex Pistols may have ignited a global conflagration with their Molotov cocktail of a single, but wherever in the world punk flamed into being, it was invariably with the dim glow of a legitimate grievance aimed with the excitement of a toothache. Exactly what exactly in the UK reacted to south Chinese punk (the *Dragness* is unclear, or even how the news got through to them in leaden early B&S China, way before the state had loosened its steel grip on imported notions of personal expression. Indeed, the *Dragness*' grasp of the lyric tumbled before the first line's out, but that can't quell their rousing excitement in discovering a voice through punk. Guitarist/vocalist Koss garbles a juddering approximation of Johnny Rotten's death's head cackle over the overhyped buzz and fluting feedback of his new electric guitar and Lou's threatening drama, while Lu's rapidly bowed Chinese violin bawls into Steve Jones's guitar part with true gusto. Like the rest of their French-released 1982 LP *Parfums De La Revolution* (Bizzness), it sounds like it was recorded on the roof, with no possibility of a second take or overdub. The Pistols created it; the *Dragness* took it over. And gloriously handed it back to them in pieces. What became of them is unknown. (B)

"AUTOBAHN"

(HUTTEN/CHEN/ROTSCHULT) 1994

Kraftwerk have occasionally been subject to cover versions, and while these are intended as respectful homage, they've generally been understood with irony at the expense of Ralf Hütter and co's supposed fly-by-night mechanistic tendencies. Bill Bragg's cover of "The Model", for instance, on *Songs About Fucking* (1988), pointedly assigns the number with a kick-ass attitude, while 1992's *Assessed*, The Salacious Quartet's interpretation of various Kraftwerk numbers, including "Autobahn", is humorous in its mordantly literal transcription of the original, including the toots of the car horn at the beginning. Not ironically it's the wonderfully decompressed solo guitar treatment by Gary Lucas of The Magic Band (not most bandstand reveals and extols the electric, syncretic energies of "Autobahn", Kraftwerk's serene 22-minute hymn of praise to the German motorway system. I first saw Lucas perform "Autobahn" live in 1993 in Berlin – a version appears on his *Kraftwerk Tour: Europe 1993* (Enigma). It was an aural droning, a lachrymose, wailing meditation, beautiful and diaphanous, every guitarstroke prismatic and reverberating with melancholy and joy. It was everything Kraftwerk aren't supposed to be, but this time the joke wasn't on Kraftwerk, nor on those who failed to grasp what Kraftwerk are fully, truly about. (D)



Gary Lucas

"AVALANCHE"

(LEONARD/COHEN) 1973

Nick Cave emerged from the ruins of *The Birthday Party* in 1983 with his gallows humour intact, gingerly walking on broken glass with a brittle cover of Elia Prea's "The Chitto". He continued to fully embrace disaster by opening his first album with *The Bad Seeds, From Her To Eternity* (Mute, 1984), with the bleakest track from Leonard Cohen's 1971 LP, *Songs Of Love And Hate*. Where Cohen unfolds his seductively slow with groovy guitar and idiosyncratic strings. Cave choreographs his catatonically rising to the subterranean rumble of Nick Harvey's drums, which barely break the surface before retreating underground to dig themselves out all over again. Barry Adamson's growling ascent of a bass part, and Bruce Sargent's bottom of the barrel guitar arpeggiating. Where Cohen sings the part of the humiliated parish with an air of heroic resignation. Cave whipsaws, roars and rages against God for granting him such a miserable lot, even as he has no in the matter. Unlike Cohen's Quixotic figure, there's nothing saintly about Cave's sublimity: it is ugly and confronting, his pain all-encompassing, which might explain his vengeful desire of the closing lines, "It is your turn, my beloved one, it is your turn that I wear." (B)

"AY CARRELA"

(TRADITIONAL) 1968

During the period from July 1896 to August 1937 Spain experienced – in the words of British anarchist Stuart Christie – "one of the most profound social revolutions of the 20th century". Land, factories, schools and transportation were all collectivized by the members of the secret trade union CNT at the same time as a war was being fought to defend the elected Popular Front government against the advances of Franco, who had the support of Hitler and Mussolini. "Ay Carrelela" is a popular song dating back at least to the fight against Napoleon in 1808. The lyrics have been adapted over the years to make it relevant to changing circumstances. Also known as "Ay Manuela", "B Elysero Del Ebro" and "Hurle La Rumba", it was recorded in 1969 by *Charlie Haden* (Liberation Music Orchestra, Impulse!) in an arrangement by Carla Boy under the title "Long Live The 15th Brigade". Less than a minute long, the deliriously roasting brass arrangement acts as a coda to a suite of arrangements of Spanish Civil War songs featuring solos from Don Cherry among others. As part of the suite, a fragment from an earlier version of the same tune recorded in the 1930s as "El Pese Del Oro" can be heard floating like a ghost, briefly in and out of the fog below. Haden sought to honour the 3000 or so American volunteers that helped defend the republic against Franco. But the international brigades they joined were run by the Communists, who eventually (with the support of the Soviet Union) put down both the anarchists' popular social revolution and their ad hoc militias. It was left to Dutch punk group *The Ex*, 50 years later in the post punk period, to celebrate the achievements of the anarchists on the double single, 1996 (reissued in 1997 by The Ex/AC Press as a 2x3" CD + book). Not only did they update "Ay Carrelela" by setting it in a characteristically exuberant, angular rock arrangement, they packaged it together with a 244-page book of newly unearthed black and white photographs documenting the wide-ranging project of self-government that history has sought to deny. (D)

Marianne Faithfull



"BALLAD OF LUCY JORDAN"

(SHEL SILVERSTEIN) 1973

Composed by Shel Silverstein, who also wrote Johnny Cash's novelty hit "A Boy Named Sue", "Lucy Jordan" was originally recorded by the then-US Country duo Pat & Hank. It's difficult to tell what it was about their idiosyncratic melancholic account of a suburban housewife's suicide that suggested itself as a suitable comeback vehicle for 1980s society girl turned 70s drug maven *Marianne Faithfull*, but her 1979 single version (from *Broken English*, A&M) effectively launched one of the most grating second acts in the history of song. Her arrangement strips the original bare, replacing Country pop saccharine with a trembling keyboards figure subjected to chill blasts of synthesized strings, which did alienate her better than any number of anguished new wave electronics groups at the time. Rather than winning hearts with the lyrics, Faithfull draws on her own painful experiences to empathize with the subject's despair as she looks back from a rooftop at a life of unrealized dreams. Her weathered voice wavers and only occasionally cracks as she relays Lucy Jordan's final moments, somehow getting inside her head while putting some distance between herself and the song. That Faithfull went on to record an outstanding English language interpretation of Brecht's "Ballad Of A Soldier's Wife" came as no surprise after "Lucy Jordan". (B)

"BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY TRUE LOVE'S HAIR"

(TRAD. 19TH CENTURY APPALACHIANS, BASED ON AN 18TH CENTURY ENGLISH FOLK SONG)

This lovely devotional folk song, first written down by the great Kentucky song collector John Jacob Winslow was given a decisive twist in the 1950s by Nina Simone, who brought out the civil rights era politics contained in celebrating the word "black". *Patty Waters*'s version on *Sings (ESP/Decca)*, recorded in 1965, is something else again. A classic biographical reading – that Waters, who is white, is singing about her lover and father of her child, Son Ra (aka Alton Warner Clifford Jarvis, who was black – only scratches the surface. Waters' epic 13-minute take on the song, accompanied by mystical outcave Taylor piano, bass and drums sounds like a subtle slow rising to a boil. "You can hear Alton after, who recommended her to ESP, and her extraordinary take on standards like "Swanee" in Waters' voice, as she moves from an achingly slow, erotic take on the words, individual syllables turning into pulsating drones, to a wordless moan, then an incantatory, staccato repetition of the word black. It all builds to a crescendo containing not just a smoldering erotic celebration of her love for a black man, or a political act of solidarity with African American or global blackness, but the fully unleashed feminine power of darkness. Waters becomes black Mother Kali as universal force of embodied divine energy, joyfully bearing atop the known universe and rebuilding it as a space of unranked freedom into which women like Linda Sharrock, Niki Oza, Patti Smith and Diamanda Galas would walk and develop their own voices and styles. And she doesn't even get beyond the first verse, 13 minutes. Imagine what might happen if she sang the whole song. (B)

"BLOWIN' IN THE WIND"

(BOB DYLAN) 1963

Star-crossed Japanese saxophonist **Kaoru Abe's** bleak, barely there 1973 instrumental reading of Bob Dylan's epochal protest song on *Kaze ni Fukarete* ("Blowin' in the Wind") (Tokuma) is one of the most striking reification jobs ever pressed off as a cover version. Abe had been blowing in the wind for years, huddled in motels, playing, blasting his horn into the face of the oncoming traffic, and his reading of Dylan's track is less a generational call to arms and more an affirmation of solitary angst, a run of unswerving questions. Versions of the song are dispersed throughout Abe's back catalog, but the most focused readings are spread across a three CD series posthumously released by Japanese major Tokuma in 1997. But even here the song exists as little more than fragments, ghostly arcs of original DNA separated from the source and linked via huge passages of thick, black silence, but Abe never makes any attempt to pull them altogether into a definitive statement. This is the cover version as an explication of the implications of the original. Every aspect, from the way lines seem like smoke to their intonation of the Dylan's original's every question, is intensely keyed to the demands of the song, both musically and personally. (DQ)

Stuart Marshall/step



"CANDY SAYA"

(LOU REED) 1968

Had I a revolver I would reach for it whenever the word *Intoxi* was employed to justify yet another piece of infantile crap. But I would make an exception for the Orkney sample collage collective *Saturnisprossolap*, whose demolition of Ayle Minogue, Dorian Dorian, Lee McEwen and, here, The Velvet Underground's "Candy Says" (renamed "American Gas Balloon Reprise") takes weakness, normally the most hateful of artistic positions, to new and strongly inglorious extremes on *American Gas Balloon* (Sonone, 2000). Lou Reed's gentle exploration of identity and liberation is sung beautifully straight by the collective's Lisa, as all around a tornado of ridiculous loops and cut-ups tries to undermine her. What makes the track so successful is how it's never clear what the interpreters actually feel about the song they're performing, which opens up an interesting dialogue with the original version. Indeed, this dialogue—the fact it's a cover about what it means to do a cover—constitutes the track's narrative. It's neither sneeringly incoherent nor cop-doffing deferential, which is just what a good cover should be. (MM)

"CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION"

(MARC BOLAN) 1972

Regarded by some as the beginning of the end of Marc Bolan's songwriting skills, "Children of the Revolution" nonetheless contributed to a revival of his music in the early 1990s, due to its use in a L'Oréal ad. In 1999, two acts beat Madonna's version to the punch. England's Baby Ford crafted an Acid House version that became a European club smash, while New Zealand's *The Dead C* hammered the tune into a lumbering sludge on *Dead C*, shortening the title to "Children," as if any hope of revolution were long over. The bludgeoning pound of drummer Robbie Woods and the gravelly crunch of guitarist Bruce Russell turn Bolan's faux Zeppelin stamp into the detached bark of a dazed soldier slowly marching home. Even more mesmerizing is Michael Morley's lethargic moan, which flattens Bolan's whiny chorus into a static sizzle. Somehow, the trio's unswerving monotony, which belies the colour of Bolan's trippy narrative and such the wind from his planned sales, results in a concoction far more hypnotic than the original. Bolan may have envisioned the kids of the 90s rising up to conquer the approaching 70s, but *The Dead C's* "Children" are more like zombies plodding toward a fate they have no desire to alter. (RM)

"COME ON FEET"

(MELVIN VAN PEEBLES) 1971

As the musical centerpiece of Sweet Sweetback's *Blackassess* (SWEET, Melvin Van Peebles' "man on the run" anthem "Come On Feet" had all the subtlety of a bearded Mobster expiring during a Los Angeles raid. Backed by an early incarnation of Earth, Wind And Fire, Van Peebles wailed away, bawling and howling with gleeful rage, but Maslow's version, which can be found on *The Unseen* (Sonone's Throw, 2000), his solo debut as the helmsman *Quasimoto*, is slinky and lascivious, mimicking Van Peebles' crackling funk odyssey as a loping West Coast hip-hop oddity. It interlaces Noddy/Quasimoto with snippets of Van Peebles vocally dashing across burning American cities, and links the two ones with the sound of a horsehair's center. But when Maslow says, "Whatever happened to the sun/Sure gone run away/Sure colder than a bird shit/You/West have run all day," there's no anxious awkwardness in his voice, just world-weary ease and unfurled exuberance. The skittering beat drops along at an easy midtempo pace while a Hammond organ underlines his track. Yet despite its emotional detachment, Maslow's "Come On Feet" successfully recovers the original as a wallowing of black cool. The protagonist may be running, but his ineffable grace won't let him break a sweat. (MR)

"CRY"

(JOHN REID, KIDMAN) 1991

Johnnie Reid is a forgotten figure in 20th century pop music. I'd guess that most people under the age of 40 don't know who he is, yet his huge success with "Cry" in 1991 was the first warning of a new era of solo pop stars, fan hysteria and incoherent mania. "Cry" is actually a skanking song, a self-righting message delivered with the kind of engendered vocal mania that led to power ballads and songs like Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Memories." Ray Charles recorded a cover version but it's somewhat less surprising than the 1971 version made by *Alvin Lee*. The *Dave Of Rock* (Grammy Nova Musica, 1978) was composed for vocalist and synthesizer by Lyuder in 1971, and it's one of his few works for synthesis. A lot of different ideas about memory, simulation, vocal identity, composite images and entertainment are compressed into this piece. As Stuart Marshall wrote in 1976: "Lee intends the work to have many phantasmic connotations—the tracing of ancestors, hidden family ties and ancient rituals.... Synthesis not only takes place between successive identities but also between the performer's remembrances of the vocalist's or each other's chosen identities." What it actually sounds like is a crazy man singing "Cry" in the bath, in a hot car, on short-wave radio, in a hallway bar, in outer space. Definitely a "What the...?" cover version. (DT)



The Dead C

"CIRRHUS MINOR"

(ROGER WATERS) 1984

It would be hard to imagine a less likely *Hivastad* cover than this inordinately quiet happy tune by the early-post-John Barrett Pink Floyd. The original, recorded for the soundtrack to Barbet Schroeder's 1969 film *Moon*, is a pained down, exaggeratedly somber song containing just acoustic guitar, long sustained organ notes, brooding and almost whispered vocals—a hardly natural fodder for a hardcore drum 'n' bass and extreme electronics artist in 1990. Floyd open with a full minute of birds before instruments enter the frame, and birdsong dominates more than two minutes of the long debut. On *Discuss* 1995-1999 (*Discuss*), the song is reworked again, *Hivastad* outlines Floyd's fetish with nearly ten minutes of birdsong leading out of the last verse. In a loving (if somewhat violent) end of the century tribute, he distorts, twists and overdrives his bird recordings almost beyond recognition, taking the idea to its logical conclusion. (DW)

"DANCE ON"

(PRINCE) 1998

In 1989, when *Lovesexy* was released, Prince was the king of unorthodox pop, its true single, which spoiled into a single track lasting 45 minutes, launched *The New Power Generation* as both a concept and a group. It was also declared that, for Prince, love, sex and God could be conflated. *Lovesexy* celebrates its oneness. On "Dance On," he also draws in street crime, war, gangsterism and the shaky accord on a nuclear ball, but his exhortations to "dance on, dance on, dance on" are more in tune with the apocalyptic funk the musicians lay down. In 1990, American improvising vocalist *David Moss* successfully captured its heady exuberance when he recorded it for his second solo album, *My Favorite Things* (Intrax, 1991). But his version is not as much an interpretation of the song as a reworking of it. He retains a semblance of the stop-start arrangement, Sheila's a stuttering drum break and Prince's jagged guitar solo, but almost nothing else. Moss notes that the songs on *My Favorite Things* were, with one exception, "arranged and performed using only my recollections and memories of the originals." In lieu of Prince's lyrics he improvises gibberish of suitable phrase lengths (apart from a single cry of "I can't stand it when you do that to me, yeah"). This wild-eyed, beady, "want game" reworking of one of Prince's aqueous, homoerotic funk anthems is fun, fun, fun, and it perfectly complements Prince's more reverential, topostrophic drenched take of another Prince song, "Ras." (JRM)



Quasimoto

"DANCING IN THE STREET"
(STEVENS/NOVAK/HUNTER) 1964

The Motown original of "Dancing in the Street" is ostensibly one of pop's most wholesome and exuberant moments, a capitalist trade-off between work and play, as emphasized by the promo film of Martha Reeves & The Vandellas (it opening around the floor of a Detroit motor factory. But its more subversive potential soon surfaced — in 1967, it became the unofficial theme song for the Detroit riots. Hearing it on the radio a year earlier, bassist Phil Lesh sensed it could serve

The Grateful Dead's more utopian purposes as a "vehicle for peace and harmony" (and on two chords Coltrane-style). On their 1970 version, which appears on *Live/From The Phil Zone* (Greatest Deal), he and The Dead took it for a long ride around the Santa Monica Mountains, blaring out and inviting an intersectional riot against the nation's avenues and boulevards. Guitarist/composer **Bob Weir** (Felt) is single version of "Dancing in the Street" is more extreme still, indebted on his 1980 album *Grateful Dead*, a celebration of the revolutionary power of dance. He breaks the song and practically fragments it to his own ends. Granted the sarcastically/loosely spaced melody line he picks out on his guitar are scratched layers of cry and anguish, in part composed of sampled cheers of Iranian demonstrators celebrating the capture of American hostages. Dubious at best it may even to imply political solidarity with Islamic fundamentalists, but Weir's deft conversion of The Sound of Young America into an anti-American reproach is sternly impressive. (DS)

"DARK STAR"
(GARCIA/HUNTER) 1968

On *Grateful Dead* (Fare), plurimorphic composer **John Oswald's** 1980s-style disc-length "Power" of this Grateful Dead's most spaced-out music ever plundered and spliced together more than four decades of live Dead versions into one definitive, mammalian version. Oswald created orchestras of fanned-out Jerry Garcia's lowland waterfalls of lunar notes and feedback patterns that bleed into slow streams of vocals and saxophone and conceptual music. The first — straighter — part, "Invasive Area," relies mostly on overlap techniques, which permit Oswald to fly in various soundboard recordings and patch particularly zoned solos into huge vertically stacked harmonies. For all his reputation as a transgressive artivist, much of Oswald's work is born of fanatical enthusiasm, and this is especially evident when he builds a "proper" feedback coda onto the end of the track, claiming he always felt the burst of feedback that signalled the end of the landmark Live Dead version sounded too much like a mistake. Part two, "Inner Abyss," is considerably more dazed, with swarms of trembled sound effectively working as huge trapezoids enveloping ever more compacted tones. It's a fantastically psychedelic listen but its most revelatory aspect is how The Dead's own live readings still explore this huge *Abyssal* nothing. (GW)

"DEATH CUNT HAVE NO MERCY"
(REVEREND GARY DOVIS) 1986

The Grateful Dead first introduced the Reverend Gary Davis's spiritual to the time and space-warping effects of psychedelics, stretching basic blues form into new zones of cold blooded "heat." Outside of The Dead, it's hard to think of anyone else besides Matthew Valentine and Erik Eklund who have done so much to refloat folk forms in bowls of psychedelically charged, heavily improvised sound. The **MV&E** version of "Death Cunt Have No Mercy" on *Lunar Blues* (Child Of Monsters/DK, 2004) is more emotionally blasted than the Dead's. Reading, with Elder's frailer, almost monotone vocal sounding like a shellshocked witness to Death's inexorable progress across the land. Lacking a rhythmic anchor, Valentine's single note runs flash in the air like dead stars, and the timing feels as organic as the pulse of his blood, as he generates trails of serpentine notes that dissolve into buckets of whirling analogue reverbs. *Lunar Blues* featured some of MV&E's most radical traditional re-stylings, but there was also a special "Digital 78" tape released alongside the album as part of the album's release. This even more extended version further blurs lines, with an odd instrumental themes from "Death" slowly seeping into "Death, Won't You Be Kind", an instrumental postscript that expires in a warm wash of modal electronics. (DK)

"THE DESPERATE ONES"
(JACQUES BRIEL) 1968

While the musical settings of both Jacques Brel and **Nina Simone** have had a fair share of variation, they are arguably at their best when they're simplest. And you don't get much more unrefined than this: Simone's voice and piano interpretation of Brel's "Les Désespérés" (Nina Simone *And Piano*, RCA, 1968) is as naked as a song about suicide should be. Written soon after the death of Brel's mother, the song has an extraordinary focus on silence — the desperate ones are forever waiting "without a sound," even disappearing, one by one, beneath the river's surface soundlessly — and every nuance of Simone's version understands this. Her voice cracks and whispers: there's a suffocating dryness that recalls, in another world, the shifting bones of TS Eliot's "Waste Land". Brel wrote the image of the unchanging river as an approximation of the world's indifference to individual suffering, while Simone injects a funereal joyous vitality. But there's nothing to celebrate here, other than the fact that Brel and Simone recognised, for whatever personal reasons, the ghosts in their midst. (LQ)

"DEVIL GOT MY WOMAN"
(JIMMY GATES) 1951

Blues might be the most worn out (through overuse and abuse), but to hear fresh music on the planet, but also James's original "Devil" — just his pitiless keening voice and acoustic guitar — still cuts right through to chill your marrow. The lyric surpasses Gang Of Four's "Love Like Anthrax" with its anti-romantic imagery of love as toxic affliction, a disease of the spirit (James tries to tie, to switch off his lowest thoughts for a while, but "my mind starts wandering like a wild goose from the wear"). Most artists would flinch from taking on this unheimlich tune. But **John Martyn**, reworking (and remaking) as an "I'd Rather Be The Devil" on *Sold At Heart* (1973), not only equals the original's eeriness — he enhances it, and expands it, stretching its form to the limit. It starts as a scolar's urpian in this world's desolation, but also of "back to the womb" bliss. The two halves of Martyn's diabolic melody also correspond to a battle in the singer's soul — between monster and water baby, danger and grace. (SR)



MARTYN

NINA SIMONE



"DRY BONES IN THE VALLEY"
(JOHN FAHEY) 1975

"Dry Bones in the Valley" originally appeared on John Fahey's 1975 album *Blues and Love*. Though he worked with orchestral players on much of the album, adding a lushness to the compositions, "Dry Bones" closes the set with Fahey playing alone, sending signals out from raging open strings. Jim O'Rourke and David Grubbs, recording as **Gastr Del Sol**, took "Dry Bones in the Valley" at its word (the title was drawn from the lyrics to a Beethoven *Lunar* *Linsond* song) and unclosed its serpentine melodies, slowing it to a peaceful plot and appending it with a peeling, hypnotic denouement that's pure minimalism. Grubbs and O'Rourke invited Tony Conrad to play on the recording (Liggett And Athens, Drag City, 1996) and his presence serves as a key representation of various kinds of elemental America, alternately soaring around melancholy in his own thick chords of violin, and the open-string resonance in Fahey's composition. Though O'Rourke's guitar moves at a snail's pace, there's a palpable joy in their rendition. The "dry bones" reimagined through avant garde tactics. Much more than a dream exercise dilly combining two of Grubbs's and O'Rourke's key influences, **Gastr Del Sol's** "Dry Bones" plays a far heavier strategy with great success. It retrospectively imagines a scenario in which two key American artists of the late 20th century (Fahey, Conrad) wrote on the same page. In the same room. (JD)

"EIGHT MILES HIGH"
(CLARK/GRUBBS/MCGUINN) 1988

For all of the amphetamine hubris of early **Musker** DK titles like *Dead Space* *Recess*, *Blues* and *Zeit* *Amuse*, the group were always more power pop than power trix, with the result that much of their catalogue has long since surrendered itself to the purgatory of college radio. But their devolving version of The Byrds' 1966 drug mantra "Eight Miles High" provides a still startling glimpse of what 1980s US hardcore might have become had it been fully abetted by psychedelics and post-John Coltrane toning. Guitarist/Vocalist **Bob Mould** recovers Roger McGuinn's modal guitar runs for sheer *beat* and he shuts every line as his impetuous gets the better of him, more interl on instant punk action than the moshes of any associated ritual. The group take the song at double speed, its velocity forcing Mould to give up properly articulating the lyrics. By the time they make it to the bridge he has almost disengaged with words altogether. As he caves into screams and screams of sound, the group reach escape velocity, and for a beautifully brief moment they play as if they were liberated from all former concerns, melding a transcendental dash of sound with the seat of their dreams. It was brief flash. **Musker** DK never really followed up on this breakthrough but as a glimpse of a possible guitar based future for ecstatic human sounds, it still sounds peerless. (DK)

**"EINHEITSFRONTLIED"
("SONG OF THE UNITED FRONT")
(BIRCHDÖBLER 1934)**

Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler's "Einheitsfrontlied" was written to unify workers in the face of fascist threat and capitalist oppression. Brecht's words proclaimed, "The freedom of the worker/Comes only at the worker's hand." Their comrade Ernst Busch originally recorded it for the Spanish Republican cause in the 1930s (Der Ozeanophone, Barcelona) and again in 1965 for the German Autumn scene, drawing a socialist songbook of the 20th century (An Die Nachgeborenen, Barcelona CD). The latter covers its communicative promises, with Busch patting his crisp tenor at catchy syncopation over the arrangement's march-like regularity, assisted by a contralto chorus. When **Charlie Haden** reveals the song (Libertarian Music Orchestra, Impulse!), the coordinating function of the marching element takes the foreground. For **Peter Brötzmann/Fred Van Hove/Kon Bonenkamp's** 1973 RSW version, drummer Benarik brings that steady rhythm into the circus tent and places Harpo Marx at the head of the parade. In place of the piano's chugging bass chords on the Busch interpretation, Van Hove trills and embellishes; after turning through the melody with an cultural glow, saxophonist Brötzmann channels Beneski into an ebullient release of anarchic energies, as the trio work their way to freedom in a fabulous neo-Left synthesis of passion and fidelity. (AC)

Lol Coe



**"EMBRACEABLE YOU"
(GEORGE CLIMBERG 1920)**

The old Gertrude's warhorse "Embraceable You" has been covered by everyone from Ornella Coleman to Judy Collins. Having been written to death by anyone who knows which end of a sax goes in the mouth, it was clearly time for **Lol Coe**! He used the song properly — straight, slow and sensual, over Vernon Watson's truly luscious — and reduce his audience to helpless infancy, on the essential Coe! retrospective Spectral Soprano (Elopress). The Straight Coe! plays, the funnier it gets. Suddenly sax and piano sever to a headlong skidow through Chris Parker's "Quasmoor", perfectly combining Coe's six prowess with his effortless sense of humor, it is at once technically sparkling and amorally comic. It makes you wonder how jazz ever got associated with high seriousness. (CB)

**"FAITH HEALER"
(HARVEYACKERMAN 1974)**

The original version of "The Faith Healer" appeared on the Sensational Alex Harvey Band's second album, *Nect* (1974), and in the hands of frontman Harvey it became a springboard for some of his most awe-inspiring rock. Heaving his hands on the audience and channeling pure electricity in a way that transformed him into a virtual lightning rod for both the group and the crowd's affirmative pro-rock energies. Recorded as "Late Healer" for his 1988 live album *Live* (Jangle), Jim Thirlwell as **Positive Compuh** works the negative grounds with Harvey's original over the industrial percussion and heroic power chordage of a group that included three ex-Sexes. The most foregrounds Thirlwell's snarl of salesman vocal, his "Jim Jones does Vegas" act as seductive as it is skin-crawling. Thirlwell as **Positive In Ecstasy Compuh** returned to "Faith Healer" for the 1995 CD *Live* set, *Male (Big Cat)*. This time, it comes positively euphoric, with a more crowd-pleasing rock that endures the pomp and all highlighting totalitarian ambition of Harvey's original, while highlighting/tempering the curative, euphoric powers of rock as mercilessly as anything by Luciani. The guitar solo has to be heard to be believed, a writing-longue moment that could be the sound of serpents coiled in the bellies of cursed unbelievers. (DH)

"Hallelujah, I'm A Bum"

On first hearing, "Hallelujah, I'm A Bum" sounds like an irreverent celebration of the hobo life. But George Orwell aside, few ever went up down and out by choice, and the song is a better condensation of the political and economic forces that have driven the alienated existence of the migrant worker the only "hallelujah" option available to whole armies of working class Americans at the turn of the 20th century. The song is closely associated with the hoboes' One Big Union, the International Workers of the World (IWW), otherwise known as the Wobblies. Writing in *Miner* in the USA, Paul Burke distanced the title from other left wing US political organizations of the time, which were dominated by intellectuals, characterizing it as "a vehicle of the outsiders, the foreign born, unskilled, blacks, Asians, romantics of every stripe". The Wobblie movement, which was down on by an army of hobo philosophers, spawned a huge number of grass roots songwriters, poets, artists and pamphleteers, and in his study of the most celebrated Wobblie songwriter of them all, Joe Hill: *The IWW & The Making Of A Revolutionary Working Class Counterculture*, Franklin Rosemont located the movement's poetic outpourings in a tradition of vernacular surrealism that linked it to the literary philosophies of Andre Breton and Philippe Soupault, and which in turn provided the inspiration for a ragged but unbroken continuum of US subcultures, from the Beats to the New West America. This tradition of politicized outsider poetics animates the version of the song recorded by film-producing Finnish singer and writer, **Kajko Vuolteen**, whose usual constituency is the sub-Arctic underground, where a self-determining DIY aesthetic rubs up against the liberation theologies of noise and improvisation, and the unmediated raw materials of traditional songforms. You'll find it on a recently issued CDH (Red By The Mountains & Sea, but the fidelity of the recording is so degraded it sounds like it was made during the time when the Wobblies were in their prime, with Kajko cast as a fresh-faced arrival in the New World, eager to integrate by delivering his own, heavily accented versions of the local folklores of the day. You might wonder at the significance of a Finnish musician recording such a song 100 years after the fact, but that would be to ignore the present day reality that the migrant worker remains capitalism's labour unit of choice. Also, since the Wobblies' internationalism includes membership policy, both Joe Hill and the movement's greatest vernacular surrealist, the hobo writer Henry Stein, were of Scandinavian descent. Hill was Swedish, while Stein was a Finn, whose given name, waltzers of the New West America should note, was Matt Valentine. *This stuff goes deeper than you think.* (TH)

Patti Smith



**"HIE JOE"
(WALLIM ROBERTS 1965)**

"Hie Joe, where you going with that gun in your hand?" This opens arguably the most widely covered song of the rock 'n' roll era. The "Hie Joe" phenomenon exploded in 1966 after San Fernando Valley's *The Leaves* went back to the studio with a new guitarist and his brand spanking new fuzz box to re-record a song that had already bombed once for the group in 1965. But with his punchy guitar (single unbroken) strum, this new version became *The Leaves'* only hit, it was also powerful enough to inspire "Hie Joe" in the consciousness of every garage band to ever plug into an amp throughout the late 60s. Since then, more than 1000 artists have recorded the song, and countless hit bands have played it into the ground — so longevity is the result of its incredible flexibility, as the simple and instantly recognizable melody adapts easily to chord changes, stylistic conceits, variable instrumentation and different tempos. The lyric too has been subject to radical rewrites and edits, but the content has mostly remained the same: rock 'n' roll hero Joe leads a gun-toting life as an artist, girlfriend and flies the punishment awaiting him. Yes, it's a gruesomely violent song and its misogyny should not be taken lightly, as the proliferation of "Hie Joe" versions provides ample evidence of rock's problematic regard of women. Yet it somehow leached into the counterculture bloodstream of the 60s, where defying social norms and outspoken displays of "sticking it to The Man" were badges of honour. The obvious misogyny is not the only controversy to "Hie Joe". Its original authorship has long been a point of contention, but by now it doesn't really matter who wrote it (it is usually attributed to Billy Roberts). "Hie Joe" has evolved into the most iconic of a traditional hymn, welcoming additional flourishes, personal styles and wilful experimentation.

Through the late 60s, the *Leaves'* version remained the template for most covers. If *The Music Machine*, *Love*, and *Pink Floyd* were all staples in the 60s, Japan's **The Golden Gals** responded to it in 1968 with an explosive psychedelic take, driven by a pulsating bassline. Midway through, they rupture the song's structure with a deserted beat guitar attack of fuzzed out effects and reverberating vocal scalds, precluding Al Matthews Temple delirium by four seconds.

Of course, the most famous 60s version is by **Jimi Hendrix**, who borrowed its half-speed blues progression from Tim Rose and grounded it with a rhythmic urgency, trumped only by his leads and solos. As good as it is, the cult of personality around Hendrix has hampered the song's evolution. Look no further than *Lee's* perfunctory ministrations of "Hie Joe" on his ballad excursion into hard rock as *Body Count* (1992). Fortunately, the true apostles of rock's revolutionary spirit have understood the song as a malleable form to be manipulated to their own ends. **Patti Smith** is the only major figure to treat it right. Recorded in 1970 as the B-side to her "Piss Factory" single, her version revises the history of Patti Hearst and her kidnapping by the *Slims* into a *Woman* into the character of Joe, as the woman with a gun in her hand. Smith's text rejects any conformation notions about the politics of victimisation, asserting that Hearst, entombed by the misanthropy of her ordeal, should be held accountable for her actions. In a similar bout of literary transposition, **Nick Cave** recasts "Hie Joe" (on his 1986 covers set, *Kicking Against The Pricks*, *Mute*) as a grim cautionary tale of man's propensity for violence. With his arrangement's ominous descent into a terse waltz of organs and guitars, Cave's daring revision reminds the most chilling version to date. (For a list of the 1000 plus versions of "Hie Joe", check out www.hieyoe.org) (JH)

"HONKY TONK WOMEN"

(DAGGER/RICHARDS) 1989

However identifiably naughty it may have seemed at the time, *The Rolling Stones' 1989* odds to loose women sounds more silly today. Difficult to imagine even Sir Mick Jagger singing the preening, forced decadence of a line like "I had a divorce in New York City" with a straight face in 2005. French top pop master *Pascal Comelade*, for his part, avoided the problem completely by emptying down an instrumental cover. It's hard to know for sure whether this remake (actually retitled "Petenera", a reference to the Spanish style in which it is performed) is a genuine tribute to the original record or if Comelade, or an attempt to take the piss out of *The Stones'* macho posturing, but I have no problem reading it as the latter, given Comelade's shaky and nearly unrecognizable arrangement and performance. Top piano, boomy jazz drums, and halting, badly imitated plastic guitar fills are surely not what the *Glimmer* Tiers had in mind when they set this baby down on paper. (JM)

"(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION"

(DAGGER/RICHARDS) 1965

A classic early example of both consumer alienation and celebrity cooption (how many could sympathize with the tedium of champagne jetsetting in 1965?), *The Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction"* has had a continuing appeal for the avant garde. Partly this has to do with the status of *The Stones* as rock icons, partly with the minute sliver of the song itself. "Satisfaction" offers a shrewdly frowning riff, a stomping rhythm and a self-obsessed lyric. The irresistible propulsion of *The Stones'* original was fuelled by a definite tension between the elements, but covers have tended rather to emphasize one single strand. When New York's *Satellite* took on the song on their final tour in 1978 (the slow-Up, ROR), the original's garage energy proved highly resilient to their angular attack. The only way Tom Verlaine can find into the song is through the conflicting face of Keith Richards' iconic riff, which he manipulates and extends into a solo steeped into slice through flesh and bone. From the same year, *Devo's* memorial-punk version (*Q: Are We Not Men? We Are Devo*, Vinyl, 1978) plays assembly-line games with the original's pulse, purposely jettisoning the riff and rearing the simple stamp into a characteristic tangle of robotic bass and jerky jangle rhythms expressly designed to short out any Dionysian pressure. Max Mothenbush perfectly despoiled it as a "stupid perpetual-motion machine clanking around the room", a vision of the obsolescence of rock in the new machine age.



Devo

But for all the music's denial of the pleasure principle, the maniacal yelp of the vocals never fails to raise a wary smile over in Europe in 1980. *Brinsford Nabound & Sentimentale Jugend* covered it as "Wolft ihr Die Totale Befriedigung." ("Do you want total satisfaction?") on the various artists compilation, *Als Die Pariserinnen kamen* (Monogram/Zenith CD), which punningly works a Josef Goebbels quote into the opening. Once again the riff gets sacrificed on the altar of bleak nihilism, while the rhythm crawls beneath a queasy wave of honking sax, neutral vocals and squelching electronics. Satisfaction never seemed further away. More recently *Keiji Haino* with his cover unit Akyo worked his own brand of alchemy on the DNA of "Satisfaction" (Live, PSF, 2000). Haino's cover frequently stems from a dissatisfaction with the original. Here he worries away at the tension between Jagger and Richards' balance of conflicting elements, choosing to meld them together in the pursuit of a palpable musical dissatisfaction. Haino's guitar repeats an end as different all throughout its esoteric and endless cycle stubbornly refusing to gel with the myth and generating painful shards of feedback over a grueling 14 minutes. The song is barely recognizable and not only from the content of the improvised lyrics in Japanese. If Nabound's and Devo's versions were concerned with expressing a broader social dissatisfaction, Haino's turns the song back in on itself, the music commenting on the music. (AC)

"I GOT A RIGHT"

(GIGGY POP) 1977

The Meat Puppets were a trio of psycho-abusing Grateful Dead fans from the Arizona desert who, in the early 1980s, impacted with the coded ball of negative energy that was the US Hardcore scene and sent it into supernova. Taped during the episodes that produced their 1983 debut album, but not released for another 17 years, their version of *The Stooges' "I Got A Right"* sounds like the end point of rock. The original, recorded in 1977, was an adrenalin-fueled "fuck you" directed at anyone who'd ever written off Jags pop as just another stringed-out garage clown job that had to stop over in the ass for the Whiskey A-Go-Go Lie just about everyone. In *The Meat Puppets'* version, the dumb arrogance in Jags's lyric is piloned and rendered as one long rant howl, while the original riff blurs at the edges thanks to the group's unique approach to rock rhythm, which heard it as an anxious ramble, the equivalent of an army of screaming cattle hurtling past you at breakneck speed. If you haven't heard the original, it might be hard to find any sense of form in this accelerated transmission of signal into noise. At the centre of the track is Chris Kirkwood's guitar solo, which in the aesthetically repressed denials of US Hardcore was as radical a statement as Louis Armstrong's trumpet break on "Tight Like That" had been 60 years earlier in New Orleans. Picking up where Wayne Kramer's continuous solo on *The MC5's* original 1966 version of "Looking At You" left off, Kirkwood takes the raw material of an electric guitar feeding back at maximum volume and creates a moment of pure psychic fire. Roaring across bar lines, detaching himself from the beat, drawing "Third Eye experience" in the midst of no-mind effort. It's one of those moments in music when you give thanks to the gods for bequeathing us the resource of electricity. (TH)



The Slits

"I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE"

(STITCHED/HIT RECORD) 1987

This recording is one of the high points of the collaboration between *The Slits* and Dennis Bovell but it didn't make the cut for their uneven Island debut album. Cut, creeping out on a B side to the 1979 single, "Typical Girls" (Island). There's nothing strange about giving Marvin Gaye's case midtempo might a female cover: Gaye's vocal interpretation, one of four recorded by various Motown acts, was released before Gaye's after all. Yet *The Slits* are clearly replaying Gaye — "I know a man ain't supposed to cry," sings An Up, who knows the full extent of gender positions untouched. Whatever the sexual slant, the song's paradoxical edge is amplified by a hard insouciant to bend. Up's modified key emphasizes the point: "Run and hide from what you hear." Musically, the main action lies between Tessa Pollitt's big, broad bassline, tougher by far than the original drum-shoot of Gaye's backing track, and An Up's reimagined vocal performance. The bass part gives the song low-end, sound system funk, while Up floats above it, stoking the languid pain of Gaye's roaring into a more urgent emotional space. There's not a line that she doesn't give a distinctive twist with her trills, gasps and whistles. Scattered, semi-erasing guitar licks away at the song's anxieties. Bovell throws in fearful staccato notes and the hummed backing vocals provide sinister warning. Far from a demolition job, *The Slits'* take on an overfamiliar song gives it oxygen, rescuing it from the dead air of the pop stratosphere. (JMM)

"I'M SIXTEEN"

(ROD SERFF/SONHEA) 1980

The original is the fierce grand of a 1960s Cambodian dancefloor symphony, a swirl of bewildered teen joy flung out by Roy Serff Sothka, the Queen of Khmer pop. "My year 16 — no women in the world. What is love?" The awkwardness of it puzzles me. "It's a musical car crash between Southeast Asian yodeling verse and Western guitar pop, and Marc Dixon used it as the soundtrack of his 2003 film *City of Ghosts*." The original (on *Dangue Fever*, Web Of Memory, 2003) is a paean to youth, to this his version is a stark, weary by Khmer House generational lyricism in the 1970s. Los Angeles pop *Dangue Fever* started playing Cambodian pop after guitarist Zac Holtzman and his brother Ethan spent their vacation time on cassette in local markets. Zac's choral length sound, alongside guitar, Khmer vocal star Chh'om Nam, ensures the group's visual impact, and their 2003 debut album contains no less than seven covers of Rod Serff Sothka songs. (CB)

"[ARRIVE] (I'M COMING)"

(DANGERS/BRILL) 1988

Marc Almond's interpretation (on Jacques, Some Bizzare, 1988) of Jacques Bert's poem to death, "J'arrive," is not a companion piece to an earlier song, "Mother Bird," although the double entendre suggested by the title could not be lost in a poem dedicated to equal measures to loss and Paradise. If David Bowie and Scott Walker were responsible for introducing Almond's generation to the Belgian songwriter, it was Almond who really set about recreating Bert for an English language audience. In this, he was aided mightily by poet Paul Buck's new translations, who got to the heart of the song — you can't really need to know that the chrysothemids of the opening, often repeated, first line are the French flower of mourning — with a simplicity that works. Largely reliant on keyboards and strings, with a few consonants for added flavour (he was just out of his fluency period), Almond's performance has a different drama to the indicated by the swelling themes of Bert's ornate orchestration. At 90 seconds slower than Bert's recording, his cover has an inevitability that never descends to the funeral, indeed, it's a march of time, in time, a masterpiece of detail, made poignant by the breaks in his voice. (LD)

"KING TUBBY MEETS THE ROCKERS UPTOWN" BOICE SWARTZ 1975

At any one time in reggae there are venomous glories of the popular tunes of the day. A rhythm may come back into vogue and disappear again for years. Peculiarly some are so distinctive or revered, they become strangely "frozen in time". "King Tubby Meets The Rockers Uptown" was derived from a fine single called "Baby I Love You So", produced by Augustus Pablo on his Rockers label for house singer Jacob Miller. Tubby used the track to create the cornerstone of modern dub. Remnants of vocal were pulled and stretched, the reverent juddering bass line was emphasized as echo and reverb were applied to make the vocal even more affecting than the original. Calcutt revisited the song for 4AD in the early 1980s, but the tune's real elevation above and beyond its milestone status as the pinnacle of dub came not from a new young challenger but the man who redefined was there at the creation of both ska and reggae, **Ernie Ranglin**, on his *Below The Bassline* (Blind Jamaica Jazz, 1996). Session guitarist Ranglin was more at home in New York jazz clubs than Kingston studios. Retaining a straight bassline throughout, thereby immediately identifying the track, Ranglin and sideman pianist Monty Alexander take it back home to an early 60s Three Sounds vibe staying there for the duration with the guitarist gently improvising the theme balladstyle with his trademark runs. Out of dub's ghetto emerges a new jazz standard, just as remarkable as John Coltrane's reclamation of "My Favorite Things" and Albert Ayler's reappropriation of "Going Home". (SB)



Ernie Ranglin

Yuko Nezumi



"LAZYBONES" MICHAEL MCNEER 1980

The great songwriter Hoagy Carmichael was born in the dying weeks of the 19th century. "Lazybones", his supremely laidback grumble about the sluggish job he neglects his job, cornmeal, taters and fishing rod in favour of "sleepin' in the shade" is of course a heavy-lidded ode to the pleasures of the loathsome life that perfectly embodies its subject. 100 years after Carmichael's birth, Danish performer **Yuko Nezumi** uses the song to play a game with distance and perspective, similar to her album's sleeve art, where a miniature Yuko strolls across a table. At first all we hear are puffs of breath and consonants - most of the song has vanished into digital thin air. But gradually a full version emerges from the far distance, concluding in a final close-up: it's on *Nezumi Songbook* (Savane, 2006), a provocative/fervently original take on a covers album that digs up old Japanese baseball songs, Chopin piano and wistful rhythms for a series of playful but always focused experiments. (CB)

"LISTEN, THE SNOW IS FALLING" CYCLO CYCLO 1971

Segaring to life as a skipper's nursery rhyme, "Snow is Falling At The Time" sung into a hiss-swamped tape recorder, later released on a flea dip included with the seventh issue of British art magazine *Aspen*, Yuko Ono's "Listen, The Snow is Falling" is one of her most affecting songs. Appearing as the B side to John Lennon's 1971 single "Happy Xmas (We're Here)", Ono comes back from the vocal voidations of her more subtle performances to sing a two-minute hymn whose intimacy and warmth is almost lost inside quiet period production. When *Galaxie 500* reinterpreted it on their 1990 album *The 4 Our Music* (Rykodisc), they unveiled Ono's original, extrapolating upon the song's happy-dad tones. Striding to eight minutes, their version opens up Naemi Yang singing the song's simple lyrics over glassy cañon guitars. As her voice disappears, the recording opens up, with Damon Hukowski's drums channeling the manic presence of Krautrock and the loose-limbed energy of Robert Wyatt, as guitarist Dean Wareham works the scales, spilling gushes of notes from six strings. By pulling hard at the very fabric of the song, *Galaxie 500* unearths the freedom at the heart of one of Ono's most deceptively simple gestures. (JD)

"LOLA" RAY DAVIES 1970

Ray Davies' "Lola" resurrected The Kinks' flagging late 60s career, presenting a tableau of gender confusion in a Soho club. Lola's transvestite never quite openly declared thanks to Davies's textual ambiguity. What surprises about the original version is the distance between the uncertainty of the protagonist as manifested through the lyrics, and the song's sufficed structure. Covered by *The Raincoats* on their self-titled debut album (Rough Trade, 1980), the gender confusion multiplies as Gina Birch and Ana Da Silva declaim the lyrics without changing gender pressure. More importantly, the group play as though they are manifesting the main character's uncertainties and indecisions, Palm Olive's drumming regularly threatens to overtake the song, the guitars chime and spit like fire alarms and serrated knives, and at several points, the song comes close to collapse. It can be easy to ignore the subtleties and the narrative twists in Davies's original, but with *The Raincoats* at the helm, the performance finally reveals the protagonist's state of mind. (JD)

"LONELY WOMAN" CONWITT COLLEMAN 1956

The achingly melancholy melody of "Lonely Woman" has made it one of the few Ornette Coleman compositions to enter the standard jazz repertoire. But the tune's sense of self-contained isolation also suggests the potential for comment on the modern predicament, and it's surely this which has drawn *Diamonds Galas* and *Masayuki Takayanagi* to it. Galas's reading for piano and voice, on her live album *La Sarpenta Canta* (Mute, 2003), is characteristically daring (realizing the piano, from whose harmonic dominance Coleman had struggled to liberate his music, was a dangerous move, but wisely she uses it for little more than accents keeping the melody in her vocal line. And such vocals, Galas's operatic blues growl right at the soul here, a wordless moan of grief and pain somewhere between the spirit-lifting wailing howl of a Middle Eastern funeral and distracted humming from a cell at the asylum. Confronting after cancer surgery and a lengthy hospitalization, Japanese guitar improviser Takayanagi found himself incapable of the intense physical demands of his regular free group. Instead he turned in a solo album (*Lonely Woman*, Wind Sound Corporation, 1982) of subtle, interlarded covers of pivotal tunes from his past, among them pieces by Lonnie Tristanto and Lou Kantz. The album opens with "Lonely Woman". Like Coleman, Takayanagi was deeply wary of the straightjacket of conventional harmony. Here, he expounds at length (it's more than twice as long as Coleman's original on the 1956 *The Sleep Of Jazz To Come*) on the theme in purely melodic and rhythmic terms, unfurling long, darting lines that suddenly clench and clutch into dense, knotted clusters. The continually shifting rhythmic structures and the myriad shades of feedback and distortion offer glimpses of Takayanagi's technical ability, but it's the tonal colour that really shines. Deliberately desiccated, flat and compressed, there's no test of the guitar's potential for full-body resonance. Takayanagi comments, "I always felt that beauty of form or tone are lies. Playing music that's muddy and violently splattered is an essential way of getting at the truth." Takayanagi's misanthropic intention is nothing less than a magisterial magnification of Coleman's original evocation of modernism and melancholy. (AC)



"LYRICS OF FURY"

(GARRHUTCHESON 1990)

Two crucial variants of hip-hop are machismo and venting one's own lyrics. Both are totally subverted in *Tricky's* cover version of Eric B & Rakim's "Lyrics Of Fury," from his best and most cohesive album, 1990's *Pre-Millennium Tension* (Jailed). Every element of the original is in some way bent. The best, originally a scathing James Brown bop, is now played in a distinctly more rattlesnake/unlucky way, and the song seems *fun* rather than the original as a result. This may also be a consequence of Rakim's always calm delivery, though, since the vocals this time out are handled not by Tricky (whose rasp might have related too much of the original's foreboding) but by his female foil/doppelgänger, Martine. She lacks Rakim's basso and his mastery of cadence, sounding out of breath and out of her depth, more threatened than threatening. Thus, a hip-hop anthem becomes a masterpiece of antithesis and, in a way, a skeleton key unlocking the not so hidden intention of the album as a whole: Pre-Millennium Tension was an attempt to shrug off nearly all the baggage Tricky had accrued since *Maniacspeak's* shocking success. He took away the melodies, made the beats slide slow rather than gently tranced out, and roughed out lyrics about near total isolation, what he did to Rakim as "Lyrics Of Fury," he attempted to do to the music press version of himself with his entire second album. Both gambits succeeded. (PF)

"MASTERS OF WAR"

(BIG DADDY 1993)

Tackling arms dealing and war profiteering, Bob Dylan's "Masters Of War" (from *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, 1963) is perhaps his most perennially topical protest song. Yet when he came to sing it on drummer **Scott Amendola's** *Cry* (Cryptogramophone, 2003), **Garbi Sanchez** expressed reservations about the way Dylan's righteous anger splits over into sheer melodrama — check the closing lines, "I'll stand while you're lowered/Down to your deathbed/And I'll stand o'er your grave/Until I'm sure that you're dead." Any doubts she might have about the song, however, don't detract from her tremendous performance of it and the rubble and twisted gliders of the music laid down by Amendola with bassist Todd Sickelrose, guitarist Nate Cline and saxophonist Eric Crystal. In place of Dylan's urgency, she and the musicians place it like a lament for destruction, with Sanchez wailing the lyric to the ground and holding it there for new melodies, while she wrings every *Nitro* hidden nuance of compassion from the savagery of Dylan's condemnation of the warmongers. Her reading remains questioning, her emotions constrained, until she reaches the bit about fear of bringing children into this world, when she pours all her better sorrow into the line: "You ain't worth the blood that runs through your veins." (RW)

"METAL MACHINE MUSIC"

(LOU REED 1975)

We all think we know about Metal Machine Music; those four LP sides of howling, overloading frequency patterns clashing in phosphorescent clouds of radioactive gain, all generated by the feedback keeps that occur when an extremely amplified electric guitar are brought into close proximity with their speaker systems. A diabolical noise-fest, in other words, and if you believe Lou Reed's detractors (ie Lester Bangs and John Cale), also a monstrous act of hubris: an elaborate attempt to recreate a major record company, a giant facsimile to a despised audience. On the other hand, with Metal Machine Music Lou finally freed the noise of The Velvet Underground from the prison of the songforms that had constrained it even in the group's most out there moments ("European Son," "Slater Ray," "Melody Laughner," "The Normal Song"), and let it roar, with and free. At the moment of its release in 1975, Metal Machine Music represented the purest distillation yet of the violent abuse of technology that had animated rock 'n' roll since the early 1950s.

On another level, the message coded into its limited noise-storm stated that music and society have moved beyond the expressive possibilities offered by "pure" acoustics, melody, harmony, the tyranny of the tempered scale; instead, the complexity of the world can only now be articulated via amplification, textures, gain, frequencies, overtones, the opening up of the previously "acoustical" spaces that link in the margins between the notes. Of course, this was the same message that had already been handed down to a generation of experimental composers by the music and writings of Luigi Russolo, Edgar Varèse, John Cage and Henry Cowell. And in the face of the overwhelmingly hostile reception that it received on its release, Lou insisted that it was a serious composition, comparable to the contemporary electronic works of Iannis Xenakis (he even subtitled it, "An Electronic Instrumental Composition").

In such a context, it is perhaps not so utterly absurd that a contemporary German chamber music ensemble such as **Zeitzucker** should attempt to reproduce Metal Machine Music in a live performance adapted for amplified instruments, with the musicians reading from a time-coded score transcribed from the original by Reinhold Friedl. (And Kirger and Luca Vericat. To these cars, what's what about Zeitzucker's performance, which was presented in Berlin in March 2002 and is due to be released later this year on the Aeglehead label, is how it sounds like it is being played by an orchestra of Henry Fonda, the New York Museum and conceptual, a shadow figure in American modernism, associate of both Lou Monte Young and Andy Warhol, who once gave master lessons from a certain Lou Reed, but whose best music evolved his playing libelously inspired follies into a through an array of delay units to achieve an effect that impacts on the synapses like the audio equivalent of strobe light. Like **Park**, Zeitzucker's sing players take their instruments in furious spasms, in order to reproduce Metal Machine Music's St Vitus Dance frequency patterns and strated feedback squalls. And as the piece progresses, the howling strains, flayed cymbals, ripped piano chords and Reed's own feedback guitar add a means that is sufficiently open to bear a hole in the temporal fabric, recreating Metal Machine Music with its origins deep inside Mark Twain's post war avant garde, turning what many still regard as a sick joke into a celebration of the noise aesthetic that has spawned some of the most extraordinary music of our time. (TH)

"MONEY"

(GORDON BRADFORD 1969)

The Flying Lizards

1979 didn't do single on Virgin was in a tradition that goes back to the earliest days of rock 'n' roll: the wrenching of an old, respected standard in the current revolutionary style (of David's "Satisfaction," Sid Vicious's "My Way" and Walter Murphy's "A Fifth of Beethoven"). That, of course, is not to deny the staggering newness of the Flying Lizards' "Money" cover. To say that the record was like nothing that had been heard on mainstream radio before (it was a top 10 hit in the UK, to give you a sense of Cunningham's undoubted shock) is a wild understatement. Here was a quintessentially black R&B number lent over by a cold, anonymous, soaring Englishwoman with a push accent, accompanied by *luscious* strings and cheap metallics, and with interspersed dutiful breaks — a groundswell single even in those times of straitened musical abundance. In fact, the song was a big crossover hit, nearly as popular with the disco crowd as with the art punks. Cunningham's inexperience in treating a rock 'n' roll classic this way was compounded for those dauntless folks enough to buy the LP: it was filled with art school prettier Cunningham's not so radio-friendly sound experiments. "Money" (This acted as a kind of musical Trojan horse. (JW)

"MORNING DEW"

(DOUGLAS HART 1962)

"Morning Dew" never really had an "original version." It was written by Bonnie Dobson in early 60s New York City, and, like so many compositions of the era, it became part of the Greenwich Village lingua franca. The recent Cuban missile crisis loomed over the song's stark, repetitive lyric, which sketches out a nuclear war scenario, driven along by the lonely yearning of the protagonist — and a string of alpha male believers duly recorded versions of the song depicted with basso profundo anguish. Fred Neil set the tone on his debut album *Four Down The Walls*. Tim Rose followed in 1967 with a scuppern, amplified, driven along by his raspy howl. And each subsequent interpretation — by Lee Hawkeswood, Jeff Beck, The Grateful Dead, The Allman Brothers and many more — further added the bite of the bleak terror at the heart of the song. **Blackbeard's** Newburner's version, on *Find Ayr* (see *Next One Out*), **Richie's** (Plutonium, 1987), remarkably strips away two decades of historic tradition. It was recorded in Berlin, of course, and it bears an authentic imprint of the Cold War, with echoing slide guitar and death metal percussion that evoke the breathless rush of radiation sickness. And **Blas** Bergold delivers an immediacy force vocal, his wild, contorted whimper escaping into the mix with the childlike force of compressed air. "Morning Dew" may have sounded conventional by the standards of *Kolkas* or *Maier* Mensch, but by restoring the windy impact of that original composition, it remains one of Newburner's most radical recordings. (CS)

"MY FAVORITE THINGS"

(RODGERS+HAMMERSTEIN II 1950)

Wrenched out of shape, detoured, subverted, gone native, dressed in Orientalist cliché, there is no shortage of theoretical writing about what **John Coltrane** and his evolving quartet — then consisting of McCoy Tyner, Steve Davis and Elvin Jones — did to a lightweight showtune in three-quarter time at *Altair's* New York salon on 23 October 1960. But how do you explain what happened to "My Favorite Things" just over five years later in a new Coltrane group took the stage at *Kosmos* in Berlin in Tokyo? The original version comes in at under 34 minutes and that was considered fairly radical for the time. The version on *Live In Japan* (impulsively lasts almost an hour and in the course of it tears the melody and the harmonic structure to bloody shreds. When it ends, there seems to be no more tonal or formal variations left to wreck, not just on this song but on any American popular song. Wife Alice and loyal bassist Jimmy Garrison were still in the group, drummer Rashied Ali was taking polymeric out into new dimensions, while young saxophonist Pharoah Sanders (who's often forgotten was 14 years Coltrane's junior) seemed more than playing them. Both saxophonists were dabbling with alto saxophones again, looking for an ever rarer sound. (SM)



"96 TEARS"

ROBERT MINTER/1985
This is a cover version in name only. The original, recorded in 1963 in Bay City, Michigan by the very creepy ? & The Mysterians, is an anthem for the Nuggets generation, a sultry, sneering tale of teenage heartbreak and revenge played out over an organ-driven Stone Age-simple two-chord rock. But even then, it's one of the most hopelessly met performance you're likely to hear this side of the Shaggs. The *Susie* duo of Alan Vega and Martin Fier, by contrast, always sounded utterly at one with their own unique and extraordinary soundworld, and their cover of "96 Tears" might be the only Susie track you need to hear, as it distills their future retro take on rock 'n' roll prescience down to three minutes of spellbinding electro-drama. Recorded live in 1977 at CBGB's in New York City, but only released in 1998 as part of the *Black Flag* reissue of the group's 1978 debut album, the backing track consists of a rhythmic box beating out 16th notes, a synthetic bassline that coils around *Susie* like a Mobyus strip, and a vicious organ chord that billows and swells like a cloud of noxious gas. Vega sings like Charlie Feathers reincarnated as a Lower East Side hustler, and The Mysterians' version survives here only in a paradise he spends to the end of the last "verse," affixing the original's jocular line, "And you'll start crying..." The four females/are coming from the sky/Oh mama, mama, mama/They looked in my eye... And I started to cry... At this point you might be wondering why this is billed as a cover at all. But Susie were always the most referential and sentimental of all the groups that in the 70s came up to celebrate the lawless melodramas of New York streetlife, and the duo lies in a line Vega delivers a few beats later: "Nash, we're right here today... to let you know that one of our friends... just died." So this is an instant essay, an off the cuff theory, and Vega means the only way a 24/7 rock 'n' roll outsider knows how, channeling all his pain and hurt through a trope lifted from the lowest levels of the culture that has sustained him all these years. A footnote: in 1973 the "96 Tears" trope near-fused on *The Cramps* "Huron Fly." Over a beat so sleazy Russ Meyer would swoon it, his brother howls and sobs the lines, "I'm a human fly! And I don't know why!" got 96 tears and 96 eyes. "On first hearing it sounds like just another loopy crip from The Cramps' rock 'n' roll comic book. But listen again and it's Kafka in Cuban here, an expression of existential alienation so dumb even ? & The Mysterians might get it. (TH)



"NO ESCAPE"

SAISON/SAVILLE/LAWRENCE/1969
By covering *Six Suen And The Seeds*' 1966 (single) rock classic "No Escape" on their never-betwixt 1978 debut album *Mix Up!* (Mute), Cabaret Voltaire stressed their allegiance to the then prevailing punk insistence on raw pop immediacy rather than the cosmic or academic strands of experimental electronic music that were equally influential to them but might have seen them lynched as high cultural weeds. Their *Seeds* cover is remarkable for the way it sticks so carefully to the original version's trashy template. Chris Watson's distorted Farfisk organ and Richard H Kirk's driving, howling fuzz guitar somehow manage to play it straight when suggesting something far darker and wilder. Stephen Mallinder's choked vocal is as posturingly adolescent as Saxon's, but he bleeds it of any vestige of redemptive rock energy. The result is a touchstone of DIY electronics and an object lesson in how to make a cover your own — play the song, not the concept, and trust that your own sonic identity will filter through. (KM)

"NO FUN"

THE STOOGES/1969
The Stooges' sound was unforgotten, raw and brutal. In the context of late 1960s pretensions it was positively Neanderthal. The steam hammer riff of "No Fun" was a blunt demonstration. Colorful and fierce, Iggy Pop's voice as a blood-soaked blemish of art and nihilism and despair. There was no song present — only the insouciance of four stoop street stunts wrestled onto tape by John Cale's minimal production techniques on their 1969 debut, *The Stooges*. "No Fun" was as witless and singular as a drunkard's punch. The *Meltdown* Trix's instrumental brass revisiting of The Stooges' canon updates these preconceptions. Featuring Mike Hedges on trombone, Rob Fleisher on tuba and Sturmen Morrow on drums, they turn "No Fun" into a saucy, joyous glam stomp. This is far from being a send-up or cheap gag. The tuba's boomed nailing bass drums the song along with the fret fitting boogie of a big band in full flight. The trombone carries the melody in a comical swagger, confident and celebratory. "No Fun" can easily be forked as an explosive purging of outsider anger. On *The Adversus* *Two Plays* The Stooges (4Box CD4). It becomes a completely new song of power and energy. It shows The Stooges lack a template for redemptive and minimal rifting capable of much more than the lawless spitting and howling mantras preferred by copious punks. (KS)

"ONE VISION"

GUERIN/1985
Stevenson provocateur *Lalbach* was only partly joking when they used to say they approached cover versions like Duchamp or Warhol, adding their signatures to readymades and making them their own. Yet they were absolutely serious when they came to address the difficult issues of totalitarianism, the break-up of Yugoslavia, and negotiating their own path between the former communist East and the capitalist West through other people's words and music. Covering songs was, for Lalbach, a mask that at once revealed and concealed their intentions, even as their magisterial 1988 reading of *The Rolling Stones* "Sympathy For the Devil" made their position clear. A year earlier, they released their most audacious record, their translation of Queen's "One Vision" into "Debutant Night Mission" (on *Guns De Mute*, 1987). By simply translating the lyrics into German, stiffening up its foreboding beat into a martial rhythm and executing the finished version with deadpan precision, they converted Queen's silly posturing into an act of art that counteracted rock's liberating promise by underlining its totalitarian "one translator, 10,000 receivers" principle at the core of rock performance. Through the very excitement generated by this act of transgression, they taunted audiences by forcing them to identify with the lead singer no less as detestor. (SK)

"PEOPLE ARE STRANGE"

THE DOORS/19 1947
"People are Strange" was the first single from the second Doors album, two minutes of Brechtian cabaret wrapped around a lyrical lament for the outcast. Despite the thematic melancholy, the song's loungey bounce had a humorous edge, but it was practically morose compared to the lithegroovy version crafted 15 years later by avant-rockers *Black Sabbath* on their debut album *Earth Vs. Sockababy* (Hough Music, 1983). Throughout their career, the trio of Eugene Chadbourne, Kramer and David Licht shedded numerous classic rock covers through their cartoonish blender, missing the mark as often as they hit it, but on "People Are Strange" they nailed it with a 200th birthday. After a slowly opening fall of cravats and whistles, Chadbourne's cucky guitar turns winsorical melody into a slyly挪移manic reminiscence of The Munders theme. A few bars of high speed, stop-start jamming preface Chadbourne's ruffled vocal, which blows the knee through the surrounding sheet like bubbles cast into a sandstorm. From there, my avant chords and starchy runs take over, giving the song a breezy freedom that eventually becomes a snappy downtown jazz jam. Shockabilty's ecstatic romp doesn't invert or deconstruct The Doors' original vimp so much as it injects it with helium, twisting an Morrison's contemplative stroll into a delicious flight. (MW)

"ROCKET NO 9"

BUN RA/1989
Sun Ra himself re-interpreted this repeatedly, such is the plastic potential of its subject. In essence, "Rocket No 9" is a single riff, with a single mantravibe (inc), a sketchy sample enough to serve as a launch pad into the wilds of jazz freedom, the catchiness of pop hookdom or — in the hands of *Yo La Tengo* — the clatter of primal garage rock. It was a Sun Ra rehearsal captured in a New York kitchen that became a Saturn single in 1968. It is almost statuey in its tempo, which accentuates the marvelous weirdness of the whole tune, in 1971, came a completely different reading, with vocals strapping loose across a frenetic collage of space organ and bass diatribe. No *Yo La Tengo*'s take translates that deep from hawk straight onto the lower registers of the electric guitar as if it had been intended that way all along. After playing "Rocket No 9" live for a year, two takes surfaced as a long planned 7" with Planet Sectors in 1997. The drums are batonally propulsive, in Cohen's guitar at once muddy and acidic, and some stirring, jagged electric arpeggiators. The versions point up the parallels between jazz and rock's freest tradition, anchored by the elemental riffing — but also by an ether shared by both parties, of DIY production and neo-compromise aesthetics. (SD)



Lalbach

"SEE THAT MY GRAVE IS KEPT CLEAN"

(BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON) 1989

Blind Lemon Jefferson's fleet, complex guitar lines and eerie, high-pitched vocals, as well as the Old Testament desperation of his lyrical imagery, set him apart from those who came before, and made his most notable on those who followed. It's no surprise that **Diana Gales** and **Kelly Hales**, two performers who share a fixation on the dark side of existence and the journey of the human soul through layers of torment, would pick up this haunting classic and make it their own. Their approaches to the song, though, are as different from each other as their work generally is from every other kind of music on the planet. Hales tackled Jefferson on his two major image Black Blues (Les Oques Du Soleil Et De L'acier, 2004), recording one version of "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" for each disc—acoustic and electric, respectively. The acoustic version is almost deathly quiet; Hales sounds like he's playing in a graveyard, and wants to keep it down for fear of waking the spirits. His near-whisper of a vocal is matched by his delicate plucking and strumming of the guitar, never allowing it to erupt into the hurricane of sound his electric so routinely grants him. The electric version is the opposite, in nearly every possible way. Here, Hales howls and roars, inordinately close to the microphone at times. Like every track on the electric Black Blues, this version is intimidating—on one seeks to flinch away from the assault. Matching his enraged, demonic vocalizing, his guitar gets as aggressive as an exorcising solo does. His *Electric Dirt Against* (Diamond Gales has essayed "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" three times on disc—she's apparently been using it as a concert closer since that recording in 1992 for the *Singer*. Accompanied by her own brooding, ominous prose on *Los Septetos Cuentos* and *Deflection*, tell-all *Reckoning*, *Ones From The Dead* [both Mute, 2003], she transforms Jefferson's blues into an incantation and a warning. She seems to be interpreting the song as the monologue of a revenant, a vengeful spirit come back to torment the living who have desecrated its desires, as conveyed in its title. In this way, it's unsurprising: Gales performed every song in the same overwrought, oft technically accomplished way. Only when the lyrics match her innate intensity, as in this case, does real transcendence occur. (JV)



Diana Gales

"SIGN OF THE TIMES"

(PRINCE) 1989

In 1987 Prince's "Sign 'O' The Times" hit like funk in exorcism, squeaky drum-laced beats punctuating a very but world weary vocal drawl. It was difficult to comprehend how he could tap it, his coquettish, or maybe he didn't have to. With someone time were reduced to its first recognizable essence, then that sound would be the best. Last year **Kedes** & **Daddi Gee** versioned this pinnacle with an audacious beatless reading, called "Sign 'O' The Dub" (Hyperdub 101), which stripped everything except the vocals. Most doors close the vocals from the mix, discarding the one drops the instrumentation. What remains as an isolated bass pulse, the lyric delivered zombie-like, matter of fact, without emotion. Nearly 20 years on, it opposes a stark acceptance of dissolution and desolation to the skeletal wit of the original observation. (SB)

Reinhold S Howard and Lydia Lunch



"SOME VELVET MORNING"

(LEE HAZLEWOOD) 1987

Lee Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra's original version of "Some Velvet Morning" was already pretty out there before **Lydia Lunch** & **Reinhold S Howard** got their hands on it in 1982 for a 12" single (A40, released on the Lunch compilation, *Widespread*, New Millennium Communications) and dragged it out in an altogether darker realm than the vaguely psychedelic one of its author's imagination. But the fact that the song whittled such a transform speaks to its strengths. This is a classic cut, with two voices, two memories, two melodic lines. Even so, there's room for the bizarre between Hazlewood's growling and Sinatra's coy delivery in the character of Phaedra, no less. Whether of not Greek mythology emerges on the story (hazlewood can't really hear Thebes in the rather named Country case of Hazlewood), isn't really the point, there's a hubbess about the story that's only encouraged by Howard and Lunch. Odesse of Hazlewood's moose strings and any backings and replace them with Howard's powerful slashes of guitar and the numbing basslines of Peter Adamson. If this instrumental backing is superb, right through to its noisy dissolution, complete with grinding metal on metal strings and some clunky piano from Genevieve McAdams, then it's the voices that dwell in their perverse enticement. Howard's is a strangled hiss, snarling its way through an opening line—"Some velvet morning when I'm straight"—that raises a few inequity eyebrows. Lydia Lunch, on the other hand, as a Phaedra one could believe in. (LG)

"STELLA BY STARLIGHT"

(WABISHOON/YOUNG) 1983

It was, apparently, John Zorn's idea for **Derek Bailey** to record an album of ballads, and thus made either without a shred of irony, or with irony so deeply ingrained it would be impossible to tell. "Derek Bailey plays standards" was a tagline so perverse as to seem almost inevitable. It was widely known that the guitarist was steeped in the classic songbook and could, as **Diana Gales** memorably said, "play the shit out of a blues" if he so chose. A couple of years before, Bailey tossed his audience with a jazzier "duo" on *Drop Me Out At 26th*, which was a little like hearing a Kluge suddenly reciting "To be or not to be" on Balloons. (Tzick, 2002) He teased, crowd-banned, roughly coarsened and coaxed a baker's dozen familiar songs. None sound more interestingly familiar and alien than "Stella". Gone the composer's contrived meter, gone the cool, muted, modal spin of Miles Davis. Just an awkward ramshackle, shuffling towards consumption without a touch or even a salient match to guide it. Beautiful. Strange. Beautiful. (BM)

"STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON"

(NWA) 1989

In some ways **Kid660** is one of the few who could tackle NWA's copious manifesto "Straight Outta Compton", in anyone else's hands it would have sufficed the ignominious fate of apophthitic commodification—just think *Puffy* and "Public Enemy No 1". But So Cal's number one wigg with attitude has the arrogance to realize the only way to emulate its raw fuck-you energy is to use the original material and lose it in the way a cruel boy with a misfiring glass cannon is a one-winged fly, he slowly dismantles it, marveling at the beauty and wonder of the thing he beholds, relishing his omnipotence. Even before you play it, the seven-inch record (J/V/M Test Recordings) spells out what is going on: the blank, black center label is encircled by a ring of white vinyl. This personal encounter with a heavy crew from America's most exorcised gangland is precisely why it has become the focus of so many fantasies of white suburban kids—because they're alienated too! The opening rallying cry, "You are now about to witness the strength of street knowledge," is processed into an enunciated, metric slutter. Beats and rhymes that were so tame and full of focused attitude disintegrate, coiling in clusters as rhymes disappear beneath washes of noise like the semi-coherent fury of an alienated middle-class teen. Certain phrases get stuck in a jumpy's agitated mirror, repeated over and over, losing definition with each iteration. The raw attitude of black hip-hop's street and white electronics's bedroom intersect in this track which, in its departure from each, manages to illuminate the natural resonances common to both. (BR)

"TAINTED LOVE"

(ED COBB) 1964

Ignore the rarely carbonized Marilyn Manson version, which is about as scary as an episode of *Scary Movie*. **Cal's** reworking of Soft Cell's number one version of *Diana Jones's* 1985 non-hit for once merits that overused epithet "smelling". Even without the accompanying video set in an AIDS ward (and featuring *Nero* Almond as the Angel of Death), "Tainted Love" continues to resonate 20 years after its release. Replacing Owe Ball's electric blues with drones and funeral bells, and pumping up the riff to a barely discernible double grid into devastating orchestral blasts, Coil twist the lyric into something simultaneously desecrated and elegiac, creepy but almost unbearably sad. "Now I know I've got to run away" invokes the late John Balance, in the exhausted tones of someone who knows that's not an aphorism. Whether taken as an exploration of sexual abjection or a direct response to the emerging AIDS epidemic—after all, it was the B side to "Panic" (Forse & Form/K422 12", 1985) and proceeds went to the newly inaugurated Terrence Higgins Trust—"Tainted Love" is the sound of a group not simply covering a song, but inhaling it. (RM)



Derek Bailey

"TE RECuerdo AMANDA"

(VICTOR JARA) 1968

Can there be a voice more nakedly poignant than that belonging to one-time "dramatic baritone" of Soft Machine, **Robert Wyatt**? Over the past three decades and more, that voice has often reimagined the songs of others in addition to his own. Wyatt's approach to the former, expressed by acoustic choices from The Monkees, Charlie Haden, Chic and John Cage, is rooted in the appeal of what he perceives as a given song's political content. Nowhere in his career has social consciousness dovetailed more appropriately with his interpretation than in his 1968 cover of Victor Jara's "Te Recuerdo Amanda (I Remember You, Amanda)" (Waka in Progress, Hannibal). A much loved exponent of Chile's Nueva Cancion movement, Jara was executed in the wake of a military coup in the early '70s. His song recalled (and most likely remembered) his parents' relationship, its lyrics evoking a revolutionary worker killed by oppressors. Wyatt covers "Te Recuerdo Amanda" as a remove from the rubato timing of Jara's flamenco guitar. In his version, time stretches according to the resonance of spare percussion, like the final footsteps of someone condemned. Any, one-fingered keyboard melodic entries, drifting toward a distant horizon. Wyatt reaches the song's final line and there he holds its final note for an aching eternity, as though he might keep the doomed Manuel alive for as long as he could sing his name. The keyboards modulate to a surprise conclusion, Wyatt runs out of breath and Manuel never returns to the factory. (RH)

"THERE IS A LIGHT THAT NEVER GOES OUT"

(MORRISSEY/MARR) 1960

When Germany's Dirk Dresselhaus aka **Schneider TM**, released his remake of one of The Beatles' best loved hymns to the earnest self-pity of youth, he took on the torch of English 80s pop – and won. "Light 3000" first appears on Schneider's *Stinkulard EP* (City Slang, 2000), a version of the Manchester group's "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out" (From The Queen Is Dead, Rough Trade). Perhaps it started out as former drummer Dirk's ode to The Smiths. But its eventual re-interpretation shines far brighter than the original. Whereas Morrissey's plodding gloom and nasal whine prove forth with exaggerated pathos, Dirk's uptempo, vocoderized version convincingly creates a sense of bitter sweet despair which resonates with death, color, texture. The jangle of Marr's guitars can't compete with Schneider's musical bursts of digital melancholia, glinting like the tears of truth running through Morrissey's nihilist lyrics. (SQ)



Jac Berrocal

Brian Eric



"TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS"

(LENNON/MCCARTNEY) 1964

The largely forgotten 801 promoted, for a tantalizingly brief period, to become one of the premiere avant rock groups of the 1970s. The original group were a curious mix of musicians. Roy Sussman guitarist Phil Minton, Brian Eric and bass player Bill McCormick had all collaborated in the past. This core group was joined by keyboard player Francis Monkman, formerly of Curved Air, who went on to join classical Prog group, Sky, a virtually unknown blues slide guitarist, Lloyd Walton, who had won a competition to support Roybus Music in 1970, and a precociously talented 19-year-old session drummer, Simon Phillips. This eclectic mix is what made the group so intriguing and their live version of The Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" so extraordinary. On 801 Live (Island, 1976), they took The Beatles' doomy serious, proto-psychotic take on the Tibetan Book of the Dead and had some fun with it. "TNK" begins with a loose, raucous groove, gradually gaining momentum as Walton's slide guitar starts revving up. Eric plays a two-note, semi-note synth motif, his lead vocal eventually emerging out of tape delays and feedback. As Monkman solos on the main vocal melody, the group soar slowly, with Walton's high speed, Eastern-inflected, finger flutters lines shooting by like visual trails, their melodic material derived from the myriad of tape loops – some warped – that ran through the original. And, as the group hit the final straight, thundering twin bass drums and all they are all playing on and around another of the tape loop melodies. (MB)

"WARSZAWA"

(BOWEN/ROD) 1977

The short-lived quartet **Jac Berrocal** covered with drummer Jacques Tholot and bassists Hubert Bernmann and Francis Normande, upon hearing of the death of Chet Baker, recorded one of the trumpet's most memorable albums, *La Nut Est Au Courant* (on Siku, 1989), an atmospheric and highly charged set of smoky-4am absolute longwinded and children crying in the night culled from recordings made during several brief tours in 1989 and 1990. In Berrocal's hands, this track from David Bowie's *Low* sounds less like the alien song of late 70s angst-ridden Berlin and more like a field holler reconfigured by Donald Ayer. Berrocal attacks the simple tonal melody with the gusto of another Bowie. The Art Ensemble's Lesco, his trumpet shivered and refracted through a bank of harmonizers and delay units, while the eternally unpredictable Tholot and the bassists add underneath in an odd irregular groove, a kind of Cold Wave free jazz. (DMAB)

"YOU DOO RIGHT"

(MOORE/YCER/ROCKE/MOORE/BERG/BERG/HAROU) 1968

The stark "You Doo Right" originally took up the entire second side of Cur's 1968 debut album *Amor Amor*. Then their vocalist, American singer and artist Malcolm Moore, keeps returning to the same verse, over John Leebeck's and Holger Czukay's stripped drums and basic keyboard player Irm Schreier, meanwhile, hardly plays anything at all. On *From A Ghost To The Darkened Sea* (The New Sound (Orch House)), **Maseki Bolek**, guitarist and vocalist of Japanese psychodele group Ghost, acoustically strums it like a one chord blues. Although he keeps the chorus, the words and tone are barely recognizable, and mostly it's a guttural incantation backgrounded by distant, flute-like keyboards and bongo steps. "Up the stars, down the stairs," he mutters, referencing the studio groove Moorey darts that infamously ran through one entire late 60s Can performance until the bewildered singer was helped offstage. This version forms a bridge – long after the event – between that era of Can and the sort of folk improv the group occasionally explored with their Japanese singer Domo Suzuki. (MS)

"YUME WA YU HIRAKU" ("DREAMS Bloom Come Night")

(YUKIYO SUGI) 1965

Maybe it's Buddhism, but Japanese popular song mixes much of the goosier burner between dreams and reality. One enduring example is the minor-key tune "Dreams Bloom Come Night", penned for the industry's eichomei female loudness by a Tin Pan Alky track in 1956. That year, six different female singers released versions, and usually the lyrics were rewritten each time to fit their images. The biggest hit was by Man Sato, who coyly sang of being doped and dumped in the rain for a heartless oad – "But I wouldn't mind getting wet if it was just the two of us." Four years later, the song was critically updated for the urban disaffected generation by Kikuo Fuji (now best known as the mother of Japan's number one R&B diva Hikaru Utada). Fuji's narrator is a hardened street girl, but still with an all too fragile heart. She sings, "Night blooming time is a jinx/flower/Night flower. I've tried it too, but I've a drink to go with their lies." As Japan's steadiest movement tone still apart in 1972, radical folk in **Kan Mikami** took the song to an unrestrained extreme. Deliberately borrowing the ridiculously over-the-top and cheesy arrangement of his predecessors, Mikami undercut them with a nihilistic snare perfect for failed students. For his disillusioned narrators, "A whole shelf of Sartre and Marx/Won't tell you tomorrow's weather." Parodying the glamorized, erotic alumnus of Fuji's version, Mikami's narrator chooses up over the reality of grinding poverty and despair for young immigrants to the city – soiling cabbage and wearing "sleazy" off green made in a backlot, while the family wait back home for a postal order, his final verse rages against the pop platitudes of the song itself: "You can say of night flowering dreams/But there are no dreams to bloom/Sue has any night." (AC)

Contributors: Steve Barker, Mike Barnes, Dave Ball, Marcus Boon, Ben Borthwick, Julian Cowley, Alan Cummings, Jon Dale, Phil England, Paul Freeman, Susanna Grant, Louise Gray, Jim Haynes, Richard Henderson, Tony Haxton, David Keenan, Bob Kist, Dave Marsh, Brian Murray, Marco Mustars, Keith Mvnd, Will Montgomery, Brian Morton, Matt Phoenix, Simon Reynolds, Chris Sharp, Nick Southgate, David Stubbs, David Toop, Dan Warburton

Charts

Playlists from the outer limits

Dead Slow
Sharp bend

Circus Maximus 15

Jon Jellinek
Kronosquatch Plush (reissue)
Avivim Collective
Freaky (Self Prod)
Studio Pontow
Emendence City Centre (Self Prod)
Beckwith & Taylor
Left Smash Up Our Love (Soundcloud)
Cl Maximas
Boss The World (MG27/Mental Grooves)
Stems Of Steadfast
Twin (W/L)
Audio Architect
Soliloquy (Self Prod)
Leipz Architect/Bo Wiget
Love Talk (Self Prod) (Punk Gramophone)
Kit Ben...
For Houston Texas Les Troux De Vos Ciseaux (Axeat)
Kevin
Hes Of Printing In The Informal Method (Southern Lord)
Wayway Brothers/Holograph
Holograph (Holograph)
Allopolus
Monsters Taser (Self Released)
Wadley Delay/Arjoo Giver/Craig Armstrong
The Dicks (Holograph Recordings)
Critikal/IMPLO
La Cirkel (Blackout Beats)
Valne
La Pierre Fieret, 2014 (Monogram)

Compiled by Christophe Esque, Nantes, France,
megalomaniac@circusmaximus.fr

We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, clubs, DJs, labels, magazines, vendors, etc. Email charts@browns.co.uk

Far Out East 15

Holograph
Green (Ecology)
El Nefesa
Gula To World (Self Prod)
Superbent
7 (Self Released)
Supernatural Hand Of The Man
Workshop (Self Prod)
Leslie Love
Volcanos (Self Released)
Yanous
Shang (Self Prod)
replaystrally
The Ghost Of Tonga (Self Released)
Andrew Chalk
Shadows From The Abyss (Self Released)
The Obscure
Black White (Self Released)
Volcan
PSP & Ashbury 20th Anniversary Live (PSP)
George Class
Embryonic Of Things Not Seen (Self Released)
Vibracathedral Orchestra
Tearing To The Reader (Self Released)
Double Legends
Out Of One Through One And To One (Ecology)
Engineered Resonance: Wood
Children Play In Sunny Fields (Holograph)
Zai Kuning
Live In Bangkok 2008 (Self Released)

Compiled by the staff at Fluxus Us, Singapore,
www.fluxus.com.sg

Ruptures 15

Wello He
Klonsky No Zebra (Self Prod)
Gerard Hessel
La Tota Du Mator (Self Prod)
Luis De Pablo
Nirvana Electronic Music (Polydora)
Karlson
Ayaku Jinnin Jig Gekiga (Polydora)
Peter Strömberg & Ben Benek
Always Connect (Soundburst)
Love Live Life + One
Love Will Make A Better You (King)
Self Release
Robert Of Wonder (RSRP)
The Hennessey
Rings Of Water (Self Prod)
Backwaters
Westward EP (Midwest Asheng)
Teal Ishiyama
Open From The Wicks Of Tolerant Yaku (The End)
Current Maki
Adam And Eve (Self Prod)
Levius Hissano
Dissect Into The Machine (East Wind)
Marcus Wells
Marselle Wells (Self Prod)
Kiyoko Hah
Kiyoko To A To Marselle To (Self Prod)
Sperm
SHHHH (Self Prod) (Self Prod)

Compiled by Tiquan Records, www.tiquanrecords.com

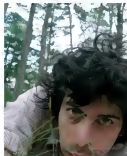
The Office Ambience

Kronos Quartet & Asha Bhole
Dura Man Dura (Punk A Wala) (Self Prod)
Seamus Brodeur
Shedding Skin (Self Prod)
Greg Melkon
Swearing In P. (Self Prod)
Red Haze
Global Ambient Atmosphere (PSP)
Bliss Of The & Oloof Ruler
Soulful (Self Prod)
Vancouver
American Prairie Volume II: The Wild Horizons
(1987-1996) (Self Prod)
Carlos Giffel
Welcome Home (Self Prod)
Megaphone
The Man Who Ain't The Man (Self Prod)
Receptor
Self-Destruction (Self Prod)
Free Fall
New Amsterdam Park (Self Prod)
Burning Star Core
The Very Heart Of The World (The West)
Wolf Eyes
Analog Syn (American Tape)
No Is Cline/Chris Carrasco/Carlos Giffel
Graduation (Self Prod)
RW
Tender: Lender (Self Prod)
Enation
Enation (Self Prod)

Compiled by The Wood Sound System

Corporate record(s) (see Earth, page 54)

Reviews



Andrew Pekler reviewed in Soundcheck

Soundcheck A-Z

Tetuzi Akiyama 53
 Oren Ambarchi 53
 Horace Andy 53
 Asgard 53
 Asian Beauty 53
 Atheist 53
 Audiotope 55
 Bateau Lavoie & André Goudbeek 55
 Clive Bell & David Ross 55
 Biosphere 55
 Christopher Blissonnette 55
 Boards Of Canada 55
 Vashti Bunyan 57
 Nick Cave & Warren Ellis 57
 Tony Conrad 56
 Greg Davis & Steven Hess 57
 Vapori Del Cuore/Alfred Zimmerlin/Günter Müller 71
 DJ /rupture 57
 Axel Dörner & Jim Denley 57
 Double Leopards 58
 The Drift 58
 Eruption 58
 Experimental Audio Research 58
 Fieldwork 58
 Jason Forrest 58
 Gate To Gate 60
 Carlos Giffoni 60
 Keiji Haino 60
 Hisato Higuchi 60
 Ezekiel Honig & Morgan Packard 60
 Icarus 60
 Jan Jelinek 60
 The Kalikak Family 60
 Kinds 62
 Mike Ladd 62
 Lichens 62
 Alvin Lucier 62
 Meadow House 62
 Misha Mengelberg 62
 Roman Mints 64
 Moondog 64
 Murcof 64
 No Neck Blues Band 64
 Tujiko Noriko 64
 Nurse With Wound 65
 OCS 65
 Hans Otte 65
 Paavoharju 64
 Andrew Pekler 65
 Tom Recchion 65
 Steve Reich 67
 Steve Roden 67
 Olaf Rupp/Tony Buck/Joe Williamson 67
 George Russell/Living Time Orchestra 67
 Philip Samartzis/Günter Müller/Voice Crack 67
 Smash And Teeny Featuring John Butcher 69
 Softland 69
 Some Water And Sun 69
 Fredy Studer & Ami Yoshida 69
 Yuji Takahashi 69
 Toru Takemitsu 71
 31Knots 71
 Timet/Mariposa 71
 Trio Sowari 71
 Patty Waters 71
 Robert Wyatt And Friends 52
 Zeroping (With Guest Artist BJ Cole) 71

Columns

Size Matters 66
The Compiler 68
The Boomerang 70
Avant Rock 72
Critical Beats 73
Dub 74
Electronica 75
Hiphop 76
Jazz & Improv 77
Modern Composition 78
Outer Limits 79

Print Run 80

Lost Sounds: Blacks And The Birth Of The Recording Industry, 1890-1919
 By Tim Brooks
iCocinando! 50 Years Of Latin Album Cover Art
 By Pablo Yglesias
Other Planets: The Music Of Karlheinz Stockhausen
 By Robin Macdonie
The Trouble With Music
 By Mat Calahan

Cross Platform 82

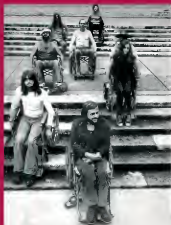
Rolf Julius Rahms Khazam meets the German sound sculptor
Reviews *We Jam Econo: The Story Of The Minutemen*, *Supersilent* on DVD, *Steve Roden* + *Paul Panhuysen* in London's Hyde Park
The Inner Sleeve *Jonny Trunk* on *Intermezzo*
Go To: Our monthly Netrawl

On Location 86

Emotional Orchestra
 London, UK
Yamataka Eye And Blind Beast
 Osaka, Japan
Paul Dunmall Trio
 London, UK
Arthurlust
 Los Angeles, USA
Wooden Octopus Skull Experimental Music (P) Festival
 Seattle, USA
Nmusic Festival
 Stavanger, Norway

Soundcheck

This month's selected CDs and vinyl



Robert Wyatt (centre) and group

ROBERT WYATT AND FRIENDS THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE 8 SEPTEMBER 1974 HANNAL CD

The rarity, or more accurately, non-existence of Robert Wyatt live performances was part of the reason I excitedly misread the Soup Songs concert poster during Wyatt's curatorship of Meltdown (the annual music and arts festival on London's South Bank) in 2001, only to be miserably disappointed. Yes, the concert was all Wyatt's music and was performed in his presence, but no, it didn't actually feature Wyatt. In 2003 he agreed to come into the Renaissance 104.4 FM studio as special studio guest on my show, *Scratching The Surface*. Sensing a scoop, I flattered his artistic collaborator and wife, Alfreda Benge, saying that I might as well borrow a keyboard, you know, just in case Robert felt like playing a song or two. Before I'd even finished this comment I was told politely, but in no uncertain terms, that Robert would most definitely not be doing anything like that. Wyatt hasn't appeared onstage since guesting with the Raincoats in 1981 and it looks like it's going to stay that way, so thank God someone recorded this 1974 concert.

Even then, it wasn't easy to get Wyatt onstage. It was his first public performance since the accident when he broke his back, which left him paraplegic (not counting the infamous Top Of The Pops performance to promote the single "I'm A Believer", when the programme's producer told him that having a man singing in a wheelchair was not suitable for a family show). The story goes that the Theatre Royal concert was prompted by Richard Branson, who told Wyatt that a number of top London-based musicians at the time – coincidentally, Wyatt's friends – wanted to get him to play live, while telling the same musicians that Wyatt really wanted to do a show involving them. A bootleg of the concert has been doing the rounds for decades, but this missing bond

Mike Barnes welcomes the official release of Robert Wyatt's legendary 1974 concert, his only headline performance since the accident that left him wheelchair-bound

recording is a real improvement in sound quality. What a treat.

The core of the set is the 1974 album *Rock Bottom*, which is played in its entirety. It's clear that the music for the album was written – and recording plans discussed – just before Wyatt's accident, but in some interviews he suggests that his convalescence helped shape its final form. Whatever, those who have only heard the recorded songs – lush, childlike and dreamy, but with disquiet seeping in at their edges – might be surprised how strong they sounded live.

After a fractured version of Hugh Hopper's "Dedicated To You But You Weren't Listening" and his ex-Soft Machine colleague's poignant "Memories", the musicians get stuck into the *Rock Bottom* material with great gusto. Based around Wyatt's "dream rhythm section" of Laurie Allan on drums, Hopper on bass and Dave Stewart on keyboards, the assembled group deliver a version of "Sea Song" that goes from the pleading introductory verses into a stormy middle section, with Hopper's fuzz bass and Stewart's fuzz organ injecting venom into the song's melodic themes. Allan's playing is simply astonishing, swinging with a jazzy finesse, then playing across everyone, stretching time elastically through a series of disorienting severe rolls and tom-tom thrums, before sneaking back on cue with nonchalant ease. Wyatt's wordless scat singing on the coda sounds energised by all this, capping off a tremendous all round performance.

Wyatt always had a knack of collaborating with some exceptional musicians, who would otherwise probably not have been heard by a rock audience. On "Little Red Riding Hood Hit The Road", led by Fred Frith's frantic guitar strum, before South African trumpeter and Brotherhood Of Breath alumnus Mongezi Feza steps up to the plate. While the song rushes around him – with Wyatt's voice both strong and plaintive – he lets up some extraordinary note-streams in his trademark hard, bright sound. After scarcely a breather comes "Afife", a rotating sequence of four

chords with Gary Windo playing the most visceral tenor sax the side of Peter Brötzmann. Wyatt then does his Kurt Schwitters-ism James Joyce baby talk on the hazy "Afife". Also featured is "Calyx", from the first Hatfield And The North album, with Wyatt's new lynch replacing the wordless phonetics of the original, "Instant Pussy" and "Signed Curtain" from the first Matching Mole album are also performed, with Julie Tippetts guesting on the former and Mike Oldfield offering his trademark, echoed slating guitar lines on the latter.

As an intermission of sorts, Tippetts sings her piano ballad, "Mind Of A Child", a beautiful, poignant song. It might seem churlish to complain when presented with such a wealth of good music here, but another lengthy Tippetts song from the original concert, the name of which escapes me, has been junked. Admittedly, the two songs together did effectively drive a wedge through the set, but then she also sang on an ensemble free improvisation – including Wyatt on vocals – which again was cut, presumably to squeeze it all onto one CD. It was something of a yelp 'n' skronk fest, for sure, but certainly deserving of our attention. Its omission is a damn shame, not least because the CD is 78 minutes long, five of which are taken up by one of those pointless and irritating "secret tracks", in which a lengthy silence eventually yields a snippet of a backwards version of "Afife".

By the end of the show, the sound has become ragged, with Wyatt's vocals swamped during a boisterous encore of "I'm A Believer", with a guest appearance by Pink Floyd drummer and *Rock Bottom* producer Nick Mason. Frith plays some cranky lead guitar and Feza and Windo combine as a fiery brass section. With the tension released, this knees-up degenerates into a bit of a mess before seguing into a largely instrumental snippet of "The Laughing Policeman". While nothing's over certain in this world, surely this concert marked the last time that Wyatt performed that particular song onstage. □

TETUZI AKIYAMA PRE-EXISTENCE

LOQUIST CD

BY JULIAN COVLEY

Japanese guitarist Tetuzi Akiyama is a member of the trio Björk. He performs in a duo with fellow guitarist Taka Sugimoto and he has recently been heard playing tape-delayed electric guitar in duet with Goran Kilibari's electronic trio Point and Shave. (Smith & Co.) Recorded in Tokyo, *Pre-Existence* is an acoustic set, Akiyama musing intently with steel-strung wooden guitar. Especially on tracks where he plays slurring slide with a pensive attitude his approach recalls vintage Country blues, recreated in a form that is fractured, dislocated and slowed to a contemplative pace. Elsewhere he suspends chords, untwined phrases and isolated tones within a medium of active silence. The empty space around, between and beyond the sounds is audibly a component of his inspiring.

Akiyama's capacity to texture his music with feeling consolidates the blues link and affirms his affinity with those eccentrically carved and scripted notes that were entangled throughout the playing life of guitar maverick John Fahey. But there is too a cathartic parallel suggested by *Pre-Existence*. Sounds in silence placed the brushstrokes against blankness; auditory pictograms, generating sense in part through a sequential order of events, but also through unexpected juxtapositions and contrasts, and through the specific alternative to soundmaking which that each sound portends offers. Program pastures heighten anticipation. Akiyama's evocation remains unobtrusive, adhering to the same steady pace throughout, a dynamic of concentration and decision that easily lapses into anything that smacks of predictability. As with a Morton Feldman composition, there's a sense that hours might pass seemingly with no recollection of beginning and no ending on the horizon. At the same time, 33 minutes proves just enough.

OREN AMBARCHI TRISTE

SOUTHERN LION CD

BY CHRIS SHARP

These days there's hardly a shortage of music that explores the outer limits of the electric guitar's sound palette — artists as diverse as Robert Hampson, Christian Fennest, Rafael Tost and Gato Liano have all mined the instrument for wayward sonic source material. But methodology is only ever part of the story — as recent releases for the Touch label (Suspension and Isolation) have demonstrated, Sydney's Oren Ambarchi has an uncanny ability to mine even the most abstract of compositions with grace, almost stately emotional sonicity. So, despite its appearance on the fine-stored/boom label Southern Lion — and Ambarchi's recent live appearances with Sun O))) — *Triste* is no excruciatingly extreme effort; in fact, it's as delicately weighted and determinedly exploratory as anything else he has released.

This CD combines the two part *Triste* (previously issued on limited edition vinyl) with a couple of remotes contributed by him in 1991. Over the course of 40 minutes, *Triste* itself describes an odyssey paragon: the fraught near silence of its opening 60 seconds gradually opens up to admit single, cunning, phased

notes that slowly coalesce into bewitching patterns where the subtext that of string noise and the sensuous cradle of static electricity are nearly intertwined with the radiant doozy of Ambarchi's long-held chimera. As part one draws to a close, the mood is wistfully meditative, and the music poised. In part two, however, a quavering drone gradually steals its way into the mix, and eventually disquiet takes hold, the music subjected to violent manipulation. After this fractured conclusion, Receptor's layered soundscapes come as welcome balm. His steady organs combine with Ambarchi's guitar in redemptive ease, and the record's atmospheric, shimmering final chord ebbs and settles into a serene mood comfortable once more.

HORACE ANDY EXCLUSIVELY WALKER CD

BY BRIAN MARLEY

Horace Andy's career is one of the longest and most successful in reggae. His earliest recordings, for the producer Phil Pratt, date from 1967, but his attempts on the stage to sing like Delton Wilson, his then hero, weren't particularly successful. Indeed, Andy himself later disowned them as "Crip!" A few years later, and sounding like the Horace Andy we know today, he pitched up at Clement Cessone Doherty's Studio One and recorded a clutch of songs that secured his reputation. Studio-hopping between labels and producers, as is still the way in the American record industry, led to successful sessions during the 1970s for, among others, Keith Hudson, Derrick Harriott, Everton Davis and, most extensively of all, Bunny "Stirlee" Lee, for whom he recorded a large number of hits.

Unlike many of his fellow singers he adapted well to new circumstances, even to the rhythms that ruled the dancehall during the 1980s. His flexible, unfettered falsetto has now hardened into a series of vocal riffs and style-based mantras. Mocking up with Massive Attack in 1990 brought him to the attention of a vast new audience beyond the reggae scene, and subsequent solo recordings with New Professor and Mafia & Flury have cemented his appeal.

In 1992, Andy recorded at David Byrne's Wooley House in New York, and the sessions resulted in two albums: *Dance Hall Style*, released by Waddeco in the US, and *Exclusively*, which was taken up by Slick Grooves, opening out of Caydon, England. Of the ten songs on *Exclusively*, four — "Lonely Woman", "Stop The Press", "Live In The City" and "Live In Style" — can also be found on *Dance Hall Style*, where the last two songs have been given different titles (respectively "Singing Back" and "Live In Love"). The mixes on *Exclusively* and *Style* are substantially different to those on *Exclusively*, and all tracks on the former set stand out despite length and duets. The duplication of certain songs would seem to suggest that only staunch Horace Andy fans should buy both albums, but each of these sets is distinctive in character and both are essential. *Dance Hall Style* is one of the strongest showcase albums from the early 80s (a period in which dub producers were entering a sharp decline), and *Exclusively* contains some of Andy's most sexy seductive songs, a highlight of which is a slow key affecting tribute to Bob Marley, who'd died just a few months earlier.

ASGARD DREAMSLAVE

THIS DARK REGION CD

BY PHIL FRIEDMAN

The combined velocity of Black Metal acts like Deathzone and Geophony, great as they are, is anomalous at best. For some time, fans of the genre have had to face the fact that evolution is impossible. Black Metal's fetish for sonic primitivism, once its hallmark, has been abandoned by mass and more up and coming acts, who prefer to follow Dave Narg and Crodie Of Fifth down the path of John Williams and Danny Elfman worship. Asgard, a relatively unknown act from Belarus, combine Black Metal's charismatous guitar with sweeping synth and orchestral flourishes in exactly this way. Dreamslave's songs bleed together, frequently linked by keyboard drones or taped dissonance. The CD booklet divides the tracks into acts, like a play, but since the lyrics are totally indecipherable, continuity must be inferred, the listener must give Asgard the benefit of the doubt in that regard. The rhythm is relentless, triggered back drum rattle and boom, driving the music unceasingly forward like a speeding train as the guitars — which, as should be mentioned, are much cleaner than is usual for Black Metal — and the string players (on loan from the Maglov Academy of Music) saw heratically at their instruments. Dreamslave is so accurate for Black Metal's parent-faith punks, who will find its 30s rock guitar sound and compassions to melody haunting. But for the rest of us, it's an erigible state of full pumping, proggy heaviness, stacking up just the against the work of groups from countries people can actually locate on a map.

ASIAN BEAUTY BEAUTIFUL ENDLESS LOOP

CLAY CD

BY JEFF RELEY

Ann Yoshida is best known for her howling woe, where she uses vocal cords to produce tiny, crystal sounds that seem barely audible human music. On these 30 tracks, recorded in her teens, she presents us with the vocal and instrumental origins of her later endeavors. Some of the pieces collected here recall early Vague Fringe tape experiments, while others are more glitchy and drone based (except that the tracks rarely last longer than a few minutes). Apart from her vocals, it's often difficult to work out what instruments are being played. It could be laptop based, or it could be manipulated patches of keyboard instruments, though this hardly seems it — it's the realistic nuance that counts. The several tracks where you can hear her howling woe at an early stage are fascinating, to say the least.

The album lies up to its promise of beautiful loops; but these are not slowly evolving "endless" compositions — rather, short, sharp shocks, with the occasional aerial sort of video game effects thrown in too. *Beautiful Endless Loop* serves to provide a further, fascinating glimpse into Yoshida's sound world; indeed, the pieces she made as a teenager certainly point to a unique, passionately creative mind. At times the music edges toward the noise — and our knowledge of her later work helps one understand that this is the sound of someone testing and arriving at herself.

ATHEIST PIECE OF TIME

RELEASE CD

UNQUESTIONABLE PRESENCE

RELEASE CD

BY PHIL FRIEDMAN

In Metal, the period from about 1988-93 corresponds to 1970-75 in rock: the years in which experimentalism at its most, and every wild idea was explored for at least an album. Death Metal from the late 1980s and early 1990s is very different from the contemporary version: the blast beats, which nowadays propel every Death Metal track, were barely present on the genre's pioneering albums; instead, drummers maintained a thrasher, more groove-oriented rhythm that attained less to rock. Obscure acts, the bass and guitar lines weren't the downtuned swamp rambles they are today; either — riffs and solos screamed away, as feedback technique, rather than mere sonic punishment, was the ultimate measure of musical greatness. The disappointment many older listeners feel when enduring the work of contemporary, cookie-cutter Death Metal groups will likely be made even more palpable now that the *Atheist* catalog is available again. From a technical standpoint, these Floridaers were The Mahavishnu Orchestra of Death Metal, but even during their lifetime they were no more than a cult act. Their three albums never got proper distribution upon release, but *Release* has purged some Dillinger Escape Plan and Macanudo money into its well of deserved respect, reinstating the original records and surrounding them with demos and live tracks.

The group's debut, 1993's *Piece Of Time*, was an immediate leap forward for the genre, even in the light of contemporaneous releases like Death's *Human* and Pestilence's *Nestlery Of The Ancients*. Bassist Roger Patterson wrote muscular, finger-tapping riffs, second were guitarist Kelly Shaefer and Rand Runley laid out intricate, melodic arpeggios and rakes, all anchored and amplified by Steve Fiol's best but disciplined drumming. *Piece Of Time* is augmented now by early demo tapes, some of which contain versions of tracks never recorded for the album. The follow-up, *Unquestionable Presence*, saw a major lineup change: Patterson had been killed in a van accident on tour. Bassist Tony Choy of Cynic was brought in to make the record after the material was already written, though it retained the strong melodies that had marked the debut, *Unquestionable Presence* was a much more complex and progressive album, every song gored through through multiple tricky time signatures and endless variations on already baffling riffs. The misuse adds pre-production drama (featuring Patterson), and the drums and bass track to the album's opening out, "Mother Man", so Metalheads can play along at home. The third and final *Atheist* album, 1993's *Elements*, somehow seems perfectly placed between the Prog Hawk epiphany. The fury of the first two releases is tempered by a new introflection and an unwillingness to compromise even to the standards of heavy metal, every song that nurtured the group. All three of these albums contain brave and brilliant work, finally available to the wide audience it deserves.



Finding their religion: Psavoharju

PSAVOHARJU
YHÄ HAMARAA
FONAL CD

The Finnish musical underground thrives in part due to a communication network that bring artists and musicians from various regions of the country together, creating group genealogies as complex as the country's fluid system of lakes and canals. The numerous members of *Aaurus*, and *Kemalliset Ystävät* in particular, reside in arctic towns hundreds of miles apart and convene with sporadic regularity to cross-pollinate with each other's musical interests. The results are beguiling reconstitutions of free improvisation, eternal drone theatrics, psychedelic explorations, DIY punk energy and anything else that strikes their fancy. Such has been the case for the small eastern town of Savonlinna, albeit on a much smaller and more localised scale. *Psavoharju* are one of the groups that hail from Savonlinna, which might only count a dozen like-minded musicians but features probably just as many projects depending on who is working with who. Nevertheless, *Psavoharju* have crafted a sound that is unique, even when held up to the self-determined Finnish aesthetics of *Isäla*, *Lau Nau* and *The Annelimandors*.

Revolving around the core of *Lau Anna*, his brother Olli, Johannes "Ragnar Rock" Pitkanen and Jenni Kivistonen, plus a handful of supplementary members, *Psavoharju* found a good home in Fonal Records for their debut album *Yhä Hamarää*. Translated as 'continually dark', the album fixates on the interplay between blissful abstractions and overt pop structures, particularly made apparent through the

kaleidoscope vocalisations of Jenni Kivistonen. As the album opens with the dreamy "Ikuisuuden Maailma", *Psavoharju* obscure ghostly flickers of Kivistonen's voice amid a snowy avalanche of delay-laden piano clusters, cheap electronics and crude ambience. If the album had continued accordingly, they could have successfully ventured down the path of imagined soundtracks from Jewelled Antler projects *Thupa* or *The Franciscan Hobbits*. However, the subsequent pop delirium of "Valo Tihku Kaiken Lii" reroutes any geographical analogy from San Francisco to Bombay, with Kivistonen revealing herself as the Finnish twin of Asha Bhosle, with all of the Bollywood siren's enchanting dynamics and serpentine glissandos. It's not just Kivistonen's voice that makes this album, but also the inventive if simple arrangements for toy synth tones, acoustic guitar strum and tiny drum machine rhythms. While Kivistonen sings throughout the bulk of the album, several auxiliary members of *Psavoharju* step up to the microphone on a few of the album's final numbers. Toni Kähkönen adds his maulin drone to a frantic acoustic guitar strum on "Kuljin Kausa", while chief lyricist Jooe Kesäkallo purrs over a jubilant shuffle-bop beat on "Musta Kallio", with canned horn bleats and shimmering cascades of harpsichord smeared together in a crackly and warm, but ultimately bittersweet haze.

Psavoharju's eccentric production techniques reflect a similar pastiche of home-taped experimentation married to pop ecstacy found in *Knel Pien's* purposefully oddball recordings; however, these Finns could never be accused of tapping into a borrowed nostalgia for American soft rock classics from

Jim Haynes genuflects before a Finnish group whose cracked pop aesthetics and hazy, homebaked expressionism are a unique manifestation of their Christian beliefs

the 70s. Elements of their songwriting sensibility align themselves closer to Finnish and Russian pop aphorisms; but the bright-eyed earnestness that oozes from *Yhä Hamarää* is the fruit of their collective Christian beliefs, which they proclaimed in the few interviews they have given. As all of these songs are sung in Finnish, the content of *Psavoharju*'s lyrics would probably escape most living outside of Finland. Even with the aid of a translation to English by label boss Sami Sänggakkila on the Fonal website, the lyrics tend towards romantic imagery of situations and relationships that suit the album's incandescence. "Valo Tihku Kaiken Lii" ("Light Trickles Through Everything") holds the most overt Christian references, as Kivistonen sings to an unnamed divine being, praying that their divine might wash and purify her soul. While Christianity is the source from which the members of *Psavoharju* draw their artistic strengths, they are not proselytising through their music. *Lau Anna* explains, "Our lyrics may have some religious (Christian, of course) aspects, but mainly their purpose is to create visions, atmospheres and personal interpretations with other elements and layers of our songs."

Far from rebelling to codified traditions of liturgical standards or recalling a shiny-faced sentimentality that smacks of irony, these Christian expressionists are a rare breed in this day and age. *Psavoharju* stand sincere in their belief that God gave them a gift in their ability to craft these psychedelic hymns that articulate complex and unusual revelations about God, themselves and the world. □

AUDIOTROPE FEEDBACK FOR THE NATION UTTECH CD

BY BRIAN MARLEY

In the shortlist of apes, Keith Uttech and his label have established themselves as positive forces on the American improv scene, specifically the hithero underdocumented Wisconsin scene. Some version of the music Milwaukee fans call "rag" might be worth PR. This isn't the most immediately grabbing of their releases to date, but Audiotrope has a quietly concentrated authority that commands repeat patience.

High-end saxophonist Steve Nelson-Raney founded Opus Records in 1978 and released a set of saxophone solos a decade back, which cemented his reputation as a dogged experimenter with soprano and saxophone. Electronic man Alan Rasmussen joined him on *Breathing for Perennia* in 1989 and they've built on the association with The Great Lakes Improvisation Project (an umbrella organization for free music) and in Audiotrope with guitarist/violinist Thomas Gaudynski.

Easy comparisons with Evan Parker, Steve Lacy and John Butler are in turn easily confounded by scrolling about seven minutes into the second of these three lengthy cuts. The flow of Nelson-Raney's playing, heard here over what sound like bowed cymbal sounds, takes him in a different direction to those three. His world music interests are evident in a sinking, attractively still line that has some affinities with North African or Berber music. The easiness of his pitching distinguishes him sharply from Parker's complex harmonies and there's not much evidence of Lacy's lasting fondness for song forms. Instead, a logic that never fully reveals itself, but remains solidly present just below a busy but spacious surface.

Gaudynski isn't exactly a third wheel, but he has a challenge finding places to work with such an empathic partnership. Mostly he succeeds: sometimes he seems happy to meander sideways. It'll be a while before Milwaukee is hailed as the new Chicago, Berlin or London in improv terms, but the potential is unquestionably there and these guys hold the key.

BATEAU LAVOIR & ANDRÉ GOSDECK QUARTET

BATEAU LAVOIR CD R

BY BRIAN MARLEY

It's curious how history, especially in its cultural manifestations, arrives in our more frequent and often less enthralling opus: Quartet mostly sounds like a 1930s American jazz band in its deklamatory years, circa 1978, and some of the cruelest (musically, that is) recordings on the German FMP label from half a decade earlier. But unlike the all too knowing appropriations of the fashion industry in which many substitutes for imagination, André Gosdeck and Bateau Lavoir do an honest job of reinventing the wheel. Quartet is, in other words, hardly cutting edge, but the smoking, mechanistic electronics, loops, etc., identify it as having been recorded within the last few years and make the music sound fresher than otherwise might be the case.

Bateau Lavoir group director Jean-Christophe Thomas Compain (drums), Gies Thomas (prepared piano, loops) and Patrice Wiches (vocals, loops, samples). They've previously

recorded with Archie Shepp (see *The Wire* 243), and although their leanings are also towards vanguard art, which brings a different aesthetic focus to their endeavors, music is their fundamental concern. On this studio session they're joined by saxophonist André Gosdeck who has recorded sessions with John Tchicai, Phil Minton and Luc Fleckinger, as well as with the Willem Breuker Kollektief. His saxophony is just based but flexible in application, and he copes extremely well with Bateau Lavoir's free floating chatter and clutter. At times, like during the early minutes of the fourth and final track, Thomas's guitar takes on the role of a double bass, and traditional-sounding free jazz ensues, but generally the music is in a state of flux, unsure of its end point, non-referential, open and creative.

CLIVE BELL & DAVID ROSS NIGHTLY LIGHTS/ NIGHTFLOWER MUTTER JAZZ CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

This is a lovely record. Intimate and unassuming, it sounds like nothing else and imparts a warmth that deepens with each listen. It's music to furnish the seduced corners and secret nooks of the mind, catering for quiet times. Bell, an accomplished player of Japanese shakuhachi flute, uses a range of other wind instruments too, including a kane (mouth organ) and a Norwegian fiddle to make sounds that are colourful, attractive and often striking, without being at all self-consciously outlandish. Multi-instrumentalist David Ross, who played drums with Kenny Process Band, shares Bell's capacity to imagine associations between tones and shadings not heard elsewhere and to bring them into being, through subtle coloration and shifting alignments, they make melodies that project like vivid mosaics.

"Mystery Lights" has been edited by Ross from a number of live performances, some formal, some more casual. The edits become part of the music's magic lantern character, a series of out-of-focus glimpses, fades, returns, fresh shapings, fragments of a rotating picture. Some of these fragments have guest appearances by budgarians Walter and Donald, whose drops and squeals sound uncannily perfect in their place. After the early montage comes the long slow penning shot "Nightflower", recorded in a single 32 minute studio take last November, is built around the alternation of two minor chords, with Ross's instrumentation including organ and autoharp and Bell blowing tenderly in penrose mood. Gradual music like scented air. Delicate without faint-heartedness; soothing and sensual. A lovely record.

BIOSPHERE DROPSHED TOUCH-UP

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Get Jensen, who records as Biosphere, is based in Tromsø, in the remote north of Norway, deep within the Arctic Circle. His approach to making Ambient music is informed and thought through, and it yields results that transcend standard expectations of the genre. Drowsed, available initially on vinyl only, takes its name from a meteorological device that gathers information on climatic conditions as it parachutes to the ground from an airplane. The music doesn't

register that in any programmatic way, but these six tracks are pervaded with an airy quality and a richness suggesting gentle flow and fluctuation in the upper atmosphere. After issuing several recordings without incorporating techno beats, Jensen reintroduces them to his sonic designs with this release, buoyant percussive rhythms that skate and flutter across strata of electronic pulsation and luminous droning. Familiar Ambient techno components, but Biosphere is not in the business of concocting ephemeral atmospheres, disposable floating headpieces that just enhance the moment and then are forgotten. There's substance to its ambience. "Akkostratus", which opens the second set, could be an outtake from one of Terry Riley's film soundtrack recordings in its steady methodical deliberation and twine of contrasting amies. Purgive heaviness is a key Ambient skill, doing so while retaining a critical degree of musical weight and momentum is far trickier. With *Droptide*, Biosphere carries off that feat again.

CHRISTOPHER BISSONNETTE PERIPHERY KNARBY CD

BY JON DALE

Christopher Bissonnette is a Canadian composer whose career trajectory takes in multimedia projects, experiments with techno form and collaborative work with The Dissiminator Audio and Thinkbox collectives. Periphery documents compositions that arose from his engagements with Thinkbox. Bissonnette favours slow and incremental development, and these eight pieces are by turns porous and waterlogged. Their surface often implies Ambient, but there is a lot more happening on the sidelines – splashes of reverberant or glowy remnants of drone, serene trickles of piano are ensconced in an encircling meadure. The full trivet of modern beatless technology in other words.

What separates Bissonnette from the pack is his assured compositional hand and ear for subtle sound placement. "Comfortable Expectations" moves through different tonal phases, sliding between amorphous radiance and a thin, sweet white. This is no pink fluffy cloud 'n' candyfloss atmosphere. At their best, as on the scolding early horizon of "Prophets in Motion", Bissonnette's pieces suggest the thick sonics of hiss and fog that populated Wolfgang Voigt's Gas project. Far from being any Ambient floats, the sound on these recordings is alive as dense and viscous as water or hot tar.

BOARDS OF CANADA THE CAMPFIRE HEADPHASE WARP CD

BY DEREK WATKINS

The appeal of Boards Of Canada seems as indescribable as that of Sugar Riss, devotees of both groups find it hard to say exactly what is so evocative about their elegiac music. Certainly a powerful reference point for all of Boards Of Canada's output since 1998 – and their work role in their remote Scottish studio is (glacially slow – a difficult notion, where vague, perhaps half-formed memories are evoked through the mists and perfumous as crisp as morning dew. Their appeal is their very blankness, creating a benign sonic space into which listeners can project their emotions

FONAL RECORDS

PAAVOHARJU: Yhä hämää CD



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Tony Conrad in the 80s

**TONY CONRAD WITH FAUST
OUTSIDE THE DREAM SYNDICATE ALIVE**
(TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS CD)

**TONY CONRAD
BRYANT PARK MORATORIUM RALLY (1969)**
(TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS CD)

The German rock group Faust's first meeting with outlaw minimalist Tony Conrad was an inspired feat of cross-cultural engineering brokered by journalist and producer Uwe Nettebeck. It was Nettebeck who first fished on the common aesthetic link between the "standing waves" of Faust's rock redux and Conrad's awkwardly keyed drone work. Their first collaboration was released on Virgin's Caroline subsidiary in 1973 and for many people it functioned as a first glimpse of the internal workings of The Dream Syndicate, the think tank that revolved around composer La Monte Young, its members included Conrad, John Cale, Angus MacLise, Terry Jennings and Manan Zazel, who had dedicated themselves to living inside eternal, barely fluctuating dream state music for days on end in search of the keys to the Kingdom. Since then, the comparative deluge of Conrad-related archival material, his return to live performance and the relative availability of bootlegged copies of various Theatre Of Eternal Music recordings have afforded a whole new historical perspective that inevitably takes a little of the sheen from that first Conrad/Faust hook-up. Prior to the meeting, Faust had osmosed the experiments of Conrad, Young et al via the conductive rock moves of The Velvet Underground, adding industrial power repetition, manipulated tapes and a stoned barbershop chorus in the subversive/surrealist style then favoured by European avant rock outfits like Prague's Plastic People Of The Universe. Their first powwow, then, should have been a reacquaintance with the source minus any mediating rock influence. Listening again,

however, to the original mix, it's obviously weighted more towards the rock logic of the Faust rhythm section of drummer Warner "Zappi" Diermaier and bassist Jean-Hervé Peron than Conrad's normally brain-splitting violin, which doesn't sound nearly as psychoactive as it does in the wild. Conrad later complained that the mix made him "sound like a hippy". Maybe Virgin were already operating under the faulty assumption that would eventually give birth to the Faust Tapes campaign; that with a bit of canny marketing, Faust could well be the soundtrack of choice for the UK's teenage heads. Fast forward two decades and Conrad sets up a rematch with Faust, this time armed with second violinist and fellow Faust collaborator Jim O'Rourke. They play three shows, the best of which is widely judged to be the final performance at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London that took place on 18 February 1995, now made available in full by Table Of The Elements.

Here Conrad and O'Rourke's violins sound like twin beams of intense, endlessly refracted light, with the substitution of even the slightest monotone functioning to zigzag the focus of the music somewhere else entirely. When drummer Diermaier finally makes his entrance after an impossibly extended build-up, the effect is almost comedic, with Conrad and O'Rourke's dense, diamond-sharp tone shocked with a rhythm that feels like the equivalent of a pre-articulate caveman ygh. But it's precisely this combination of brain-piercing clarity and monosyllabic rhythmic thrust – of earth and space magic – that gives the music much of its elemental power. Conrad's instructions to the Faust rhythm section was to "keep the beat steady", but both Peron and Diermaier can't resist inserting the odd covert phrase, the urge to rock-outlet evidently not completely extinct. The dynamic proves to be highly infectious, with the result that both Conrad and O'Rourke tighten their grip on

David Keenan welcomes two archive releases that relocate Tony Conrad deep inside the Dream Syndicate

the volume, bowing just that little bit harder and playing with the kind of emphatic energy that turns a drone into a riff. Parts of the performance bear uncanny similarities to the Heavy Metal minimalism of New York conceptualists like Rhys Chatham and Glenn Branca. In the claustrophobic calm between the end of "From The Side Of Man And Womankind" (which Peron signals by smashing a brick with a sledgehammer) and the start of "Encore!", some Northern punk yells out: "Fuck you, you middle class prick!" in the direction of an audience member who'd had enough, and was getting up to leave, imagining this might be directed at himself. Conrad's musical response for the encore is reassuringly dumb: play fucking loud.

Conrad's minimalism was always political and tied up in relative notions of time and its suspension, as well as using sounds and tunings that subvert and undermine traditional power structures, best illustrated by one of his major modern works, 1965's *Slapping Pythagoras*. The newly unearthed Bryant Park Moratorium Rally (1969) functions as a tangential investigation of aspects of his thought applied to two simultaneous sonic events relating to the Vietnam War and the complementary and antagonistic interaction between them. Originally made available as a free, Internet-only MP3 file at the eve of the US invasion of Iraq, 2003, it consists of a single 50 minute recording made by Conrad back in 1969 using two microphones, one pointing out the window of his fifth floor loft on 42nd Street recording the Vietnam Moratorium Rally on 15 October, the other directed at a television news channel. Given the length of the recording, it's difficult to stay tuned to the actual content of the various overlapping sonic events, with the result that the two sides soon blur into a synchaous flux, with the beautiful sound of the people united against fascist fucks obliterated by the maddening chatter of media fiction. □

With *Carpine Headphase*, their first album for three years, the duo have escaped the womb-like warmth and dense, enveloping textures of *Geogeddi* in favour of airy melodies and relaxed guitar strummings, sources which are then artfully aged through fuzz and phase. However, the duo only get halfway to creating the sonic enigmas they intend. Making the ear search for origins of sounds that actually are carefully placed creates an intriguing play of vertical layers, but the spell is broken by song structures that are barely less predictable or generic than mouldy old trip-hop. Percussion is often played live, yet nearly sounds like a drum machine on cruise control. The guitar figures are no more adventurous than a radio chooking the tuning.

The swelling strings of "Odeyan Cowboy" recall the taper of Massive Attack's *Mezmerize* — sluggish melancholy masquerading as profundity. There is considerable relief in the last 15 minutes of the album. Being beatless, they feel immeasurably more imaginative and less pressed than the preceding 13 tracks. But, sadly, much of *The Carpine Headphase* is like sitting through an interminable demonstration of a million Photoshop-style filter effects.

VASHTI BUNYAN LOOKFORTHING

POP CD
BY DAVID KENNEDY

Vashti Bunyan's reputation as one of the UK's most experimentally beautiful folk song stylists is based on just one stellar album, 1970's *Just Another Diamond Day*, recorded by Wiltshire-based producer Joe Boyd with members of the Incredible String Band and Fairport Convention. With Bunyan's subsequent disappearance, this sublime recording took on the air of a mysterious farewell to the world in much the same way as the still unreleased Shlohmo MacDonald's two albums for BAC. But Bunyan returned to the spotlight in the late 90s with the encouragement of a new group of admirers and since then has worked with Armin Greder, Glenanne Barnhart and Steve Mallouk. *Lookforthing* is the first new collection since her return, and it feels as seamlessly connected to the source as her debut.

Despite a lot of bag-glee guests that runs as long as your patience (the aforementioned Barnhart, Joanne Newsom et al), the other players' contributions are suitably transparent, with most tracks assembled around Bunyan's translucent, barely-there vocal, accompanied by piano or guitar. The atmosphere is of an evocative rain-soaked woodland, the same kind of slowed-down glacially paced dreaminess by the likes of Jim Mitchell and Linda Perhacs. The subtle ornate arrangements work to locate it deep in the heart of a very English landscape. The use of French horn in particular gives it a hint of the baroque-banquet favoured by Carl Davis (Lewis' Secret Domain).

That comparison becomes even more overt on the piano tracks, where her slightly mannered vocals sound a lot like Durito singing *Buy One*. But despite a plethora of stylistic egotisms, *Lookforthing* manages to transcend both the confines of her method and this time in what it was recorded. As an atmospheric shot of temporarily dislocated folk art, it's perfectly alongside *Just Another Diamond Day*.

NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS THE PROPOSITION

MUTE CD

BY SAM WATTS

This is not Nick Cave's first musical involvement with film. In 1988 he contributed both dialogue and a score to John Hillcoat's *Ghosts... Of The Dead*. For *The Proposition*, Cave wrote the screenplay, with William Williamson (The Dry Tree, The Bad Seeds), the soundtrack. Set in 19th-century Australia, the film is a bleak parable centred with many of Cave's recurring themes — murder, love, regret and revenge — in which two outlaw brothers must kill a third to save their own lives.

The music is as bleak and stripped down as the film, swinging between brief pastoral tunes (poems "Sad Violent Thing") and more developed songs, such as the title track and "The Rider". Ellis was the backbone of most of these sketches. Occasionally it's multitracked into a resonant swirl ("Queen's Theme"), or loosing a sweet folk duet ("The Rider 2"). More often it's ghostly alone — was often accompanied by ghostly touches of piano, guitar or vocals murmured at the edge of audibility. Only rarely do Cave and Ellis include any sound unmitigated in the 19th century, such as the muted growl of a reversed bassline.

The tracks' construction vary from improvised responses to specific scenes to the manipulation of loops constructed by Ellis. Nonetheless, there is a real coherence to these 16 tracks, bound by a spectral sense of narrative conjured through the recurrence of "The Proposition" and "The Rider". The soundtrack makes musical nods to Harry Smith's *Anthology Of American Folk Music* and (in spirit more than sound), the desert elegies of Neil Young's soundtrack for Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man*. With Ellis's help, Cave has armed the circle of the film's elements within his work.

GREG DAVIS & STEVEN HESS DECISIONS

LOVE/JOE CD

BY MARK BARNES

Laptop producer and Autumn Records founder Greg Davis collaborates here with percussionist Steven Hess, best known for his work with Pan American and Orphee Ensemble, among others, but his contribution to these pieces is so minimal that one could be forgiven for not recognising that there is percussion on these recordings — his gong notes and insected clicks being easily mistaken for the cratchy claps of sound emanating from Owen's laptop. The virtual interchangeability of sounds generated by software or the most analogue musical act of software — fitting something — is a constantly fascinating feature of this music. On pieces like "042900(06)", synthetic notes bubble up in the spaces between Hess's snare drum beats. And anyone intent on playing "boot the sound" the music has been pressed to identify if that resonant bass note is an electronic pulse or a tom-tom struck with a soft-ended stick.

While such more overt statements are certainly never compelling, or some of these duets the musicians exhibit an extraordinary pose — elegance, alacrity — while creating on improvised devices of great subtlety. Coming from what sounds like distressed clockwork systems communicating with each other, the rhythmic ruses on "060300(11)" open out into a

luscianting discourse between the two musicians, while "060300(15)" comes over like the mystical equivalent of Brownian motion, or processes taking place on a subatomic level.

Hess bows his synth on "041800(04)", adding a metallic sheen as the laptop emits a sequence of signals that's as near as this set comes to tempered music. The lengthy closing, "041800(07)", makes for a more of a similar soundtrack. Owen's laptop takes the listener with a hard-edged signal that keeps coming around like a lighthouse beam, which starts to disintegrate as the pieces come to a close.

DJ /RUPTURE LOW INCOME TOMORROWLAND

TRX CD

BY MATTHEW INGRAM

DJ /rupture's original breakthrough, 2001's *present* (old feet) TRX, was the most accurate soundtrack to the devastation and confusion of the 11 September attacks, one which succeeded in subtly embracing the full global picture at a time when all eyes were on the USA. Exploiting the excellent *Minesweeper Suite*, *Low Income Tomorrowland* was originally commissioned by the highly regarded Lemon-Bed Weblog. This signals the continuing impact of blogs, as well as accounting for the disc's loose-limbed theme, it's as if, without the pressure of delivering a CD proper, DJ /rupture has produced something personal and adventurous. Induced here, among other improbabilities, is a Tracy Chapman remix.

Picking highlights is almost easy, so immersed and multi-layered is the mix. With DJ /rupture opting for Grime producer Esplanade's mix of MIA's "Pull Up The Poodle" above the original mix, the prevalence of his tunes as confounding. Bong-Ra's "Old Skool Armageddon" is revisionist reggae-jungle, with its jacked dancehall samples spooled over sliding Armin breaks. The signal is scrambled again by DJ /rupture overlaying Junior Byle's noise classic "Fick Away". This work is self-reflexive. Highlighting a sense of esoteric irrelevance in the post-collapse era, it is the collector's most philosophical point.

The CD creates somewhat wistfully list *Low Income Tomorrowland*'s "main ingredients", far to breakdown its individual components would presumably take too long. These include the fluid nimble-toed raps of David Banner's "Crank It Up!", the still glowing notes on the breaks of Kumbia's "Backward Country Boy Explosion", Sade's satisfactorily cooing rhaps, the unfurling emanating Grime. It's particularly heartening to see DJ /rupture embrace London's Grime, making them as the single ghettoising intervention. And DJ is by no means so indisposed points. The undomesticated East Connectors' "We're Ready" and Jammie coasts Low White's "I & J" features in *Low Income Tomorrowland*. The CD plus format allows DJ /rupture to sneak in a set he turned in for Hamburg's BTM FM. Even heavier on Grime, it also takes in his usual coordinates of Chuk, donkath, the music of the North African Muslim continuum and Squares.

AXEL DÖRNER & JIM DENLEY DISTINCTIONS

BY BRIAN MORRIS

Axel Dörner didn't make his first solo CD until 2001. He picked the right label for it, though. A

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Soundcheck

But Secret is almost a description of the ultracrisp language of breath sounds and microsecond gestures he makes on his Holton slide trumpet. Fascinating as that was, Domes is probably better known for his association with others—guitarist Keen Drum, cellist Fred Longberg-Horn on 2009's *Object 2*, and now

Australian flautist/saxophonist Ken Derley. Discreetly, a almost curiously quiet in places. My intent is that Derley displays his saxophone more often on this than on some projects (say, his own Dark Matter or Virginio) but it's very difficult to determine whether sounds are made by brass valves, reeds, or simply by the players' breath. There are also soft rips and screams that sound as if electronic processing might have taken place, though none is credited, so I guess not.

Beyond the technical level, Distinctions has a moody movement that pulls you inward toward the speakers to catch every slight inflection and every moment of not-quite silence. I switched to headphones for a second listen, and bigger me, there's a whole other spectrum of sound buried away in there. It's an astonishing record, one that deserves the widest possible circulation. How you'd go about sourcing it, though, no idea. No address, no Website gives.

DOUBLE LEOPARDS OUT OF ONE, THROUGH ONE AND TO ONE

BY MARK MASTERS

It'd hard to quantify the singular talents of Brooklyn quartet Double Leopards. While the music can be summed in one simple word—DROWNE—the specific tools that distinguish the group from other 'wall of noise' makers are harder to identify. But Dr Df Dne, Through Dne And Df Dne evokes aspects of the best dose merchants—the tonal heaviness of Phil Niblock, the scamping intensity of Tony Conrad—but

there's something different about Double Leopards' rivers of sound and noise. Maybe it's the arbitrary use of vocals, or the unique physical approach (the group squat over equipment like athletes scrambling on pavement). Or maybe it's just that, over numerous releases and performances, the group's massive eruptions have developed an inimitable personality.

Like the epic 2003 double LP *Alive Mean*, Dr Df Dne was recorded at Brooklyn's Rave Room Room under the engineering eye of Samas Labadie, but otherwise the two albums are quite different. Where on *Alive Mean* individual sound elements like rattles, cets and feedback were often more music than noise, here the music and feedback, baying its parts under a dark,

slow-moving surface. As a result, the album's two untitled, side-length tracks are stunningly even, with wails, moans and creeping rhythms that sound more like the ghosts of dead sounds than eruptions of living ones.

Side one starts with a gravelly rattle that portends desolates into a distant, high-pitched echo, evoking the "Laptop And Beyond The Infinite" section of Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey if it were projected onto an ocean floor. The second side is even more chilling, with echoing cycles and faded sounds so heavy and disorienting they seem to induce surreal vertigo. But Dr Df Dne might not convert any non-

believers, but Double Leopards' subtle shift toward more shadowy territory indicates they have many more projects to preach.

THE DRIFT NOUMENA

BY DANIEL RESIDENCE CD

BY SAM DWAN

The Drift are a San Francisco quartet comprising trumpet, guitar, upright bass and drums, who make loose, loose-limbed pastoral instrumentals. If the instrumental textures and unrelenting jazz and dub influences suggest the Chicago scene of Terence at it, it isn't long before the group's ensemble playing locates them more accurately as inheritors of the open-ended, wide-eyed wonder of West Coast forerunners like The Grateful Dead. This debut album explores the aesthetics of reference and influence to what past-rock cast assemblage, and instead conjures up plain rock forward-thinking pictures.

"Gardening, Not Architecture" sets the tone, opening the album over 11 straining minutes. Perhaps the title is an oblique manifesto, describing the way these long pieces unfold organically rather than to any overdetermined, pre-planned structure. They barely have identifiable parts or sections, but rather progress, in which the instruments migrate by degrees. And this applies to individual notes as much as to whole tracks. The trumpet playing of Jeff Jacobs has led to comparisons with Miles Davis circa *A Silent Way* (no doubt suggested in part by the jazz-inflected atmospheres and slow-burning durations), an overstated comparison, but Jacobs (like Davis) is clear with space.

He allows notes to hang long in the air as they decay softly through the mix. Danny Grody's keys or "transients" are similarly spare, and they signify all the more for it. Grody is usually on guitar, creating it into swells and shudders through dense fields of delay. At other times his tone has a lovely, chiming clarity, peeling out unfussy arpeggios. Rich Doult on drums and Sita Shokri meanwhile fit together some grooves that precede the album turning into a succession of vaporous atmospheres. The Drift reportedly took two years building up to recording. Hopefully, they've now hit their stride and they'll produce more of these gorgeous stretches of ensemble lyricism sometime before 2007.

ERUPTION

BY DANIEL RESIDENCE

BY DANIEL RESIDENCE

Eruption was a multidisciplinary liveform ensemble put together by cellist, violinist and early electronic improviser Conrad Schnitzler in 1970 as an adjunct to his work with Kraut behemoths Tangerine Dream and Klaus. They seem to have functioned more as a thinktank for the then explosive Krautbook scene than a straightforward playing group, with a revolving membership that at points included members of Embryo, Ash Ra Tempel and Agitation Free. Details of Eruption's Berlin actions have appeared in most comprehensive German rock overviews, but up until now there has been no documentation, making Eruption's archival unearthing of a 1970 live performance from Studio Freudmann, Berlin all the more significant.

Although the picture on the back features footage of a bag band with members of Amen Duet and Ash Ra Tempel, the LP documents a live set from Schnitzler, Wolfgang Seidel and Klaus Freudmann that is much more punk than the group's links to such centres of Krautrock bohemism might suggest. The music starts out fairly fragmentary, with sustained violin drags caught in a mix of scattered percussions, short passages of silence and wailing effects.

Although it's a little tentative at first, this slightly more deliberate approach is borne of a hard-learned improvisatory ethos, based more on exploring aspects of interactive dialogue than free rock gush. But after the parameters of the exchange have been fully established, the trio start to move the music out with tracks based around oscillating analogue tones, lural violin and distorted improvised vocals that sound eerily like the freeform punk of Dylan Newkirk's Blood Stains and Dealer Pings. Side two feels a little more of its time—a good thing—with fuzz-wah, organ and drums generating circular hymns to nature that are as ferociously monolithic as anything by Klaus Dinger's La Dissection. The inspired combination of rock dynamics, freely improvised dialogue and marauding electronics makes this another one of those historically updating releases that captures a moment of conceptual preconception decades before it would be fully assimilated. But all the jaw-dropping formal considerations aside, Eruption makes for a thrilling stand-alone ride.

EXPERIMENTAL AUDIO RESEARCH

WORD TO A SHADOW

BY KEN HOLLINGS

Established in 1990, EAR has served as a side project for Sonic Boom to extend his ideas towards some kind of renewed conviction, and as such serves as a useful demarcation within which to develop his more intriguing sonic assemblages. What was once only a flimsy between a series of releases.

The first groups collected together on *Word To A Shadow* share a relaxed simplicity that is quite antithetical over prolonged periods of exposure, not the least because apart of them displays any obvious traces of forced repetition, looping or sequencing. Instead each comprises an overlapping sequence of fleetingly cadences, often involving tones generated by such analogue standbys as the EMS synth ARS and the VCS3.

The title track is the longest, a slowly evolving work of ailing textures and phased notes that veers its rather languid moods over 24 minutes. "Delan Laurel," as the title suggests, comes across as a touching and respectful tribute to the late great Dole Derynham, one of the finest electronic music composers this country has produced. As well as referencing her 1968 composition "The Delan Laurel" from the first BBC Radiophonic Music collection, it also contains discernible echoes of Derynham's classic "Blue Veils And Golden Sands," originally recorded for a television documentary on the nomadic tribes of the Sahara. Meanwhile "Blue Lust" and "Nott" the last two feature a similarly languorous feel, conveying the haunted impression that Sonic Boom is somehow reaching back to a sense of what electronics

music should have sounded like. That may not seem very forward-looking, but it does act as an impressive reminder of where we've come from. It never hurts to adjust the rear view mirror now and again.

FIELDWORK SIMULATED PROGRESS

BY PHIL FREEMAN

Fieldwork started life as a three-way collaboration, but it's beginning to feel more like The Viny Viny Trio, as he's the only original member left on this second release. A/D saxophonist Steve Lehman has replaced Aaron Stewart and drummer Didi Kauer has departed since the recording, with Tishawn Sony taking his place. *Simulated Progress* is a musician-scoring disc, produced and engineered by Scott Harding (best known as Scotty Hard, a former World Sound and New Kingdom collaborator).

It gives Kauer's drums a pleasing bit of extra texture, filling the low-end space vacated by the absence of a bassist. On the third track, "Hips," a weird effect makes them sound gleefully anticipatory. Aker's got a light touch on the keyboard, he's been the gleaming center of a number of discs on which he's guested, including several Burnt Sugar albums and Rudresh Mahapatra's *Mother Nature*. In the absence of a bassist, he's required to indicate chordal structure for each piece while adding filigree and melodic ornamentation, and he balances both tasks with deftness and a quick intellect. His interactions with Lehman are high evolutions of the post-bop art form, reminiscent of the dances between Greg Davis and Jason Moran.

The shortest track on the disc, "Telestatic," is also one of the most interesting, adopting an almost Latin rhythm that creates plenty of opportunities for each player to assume a temporary lead role, all in less than three minutes. Though there's plenty of free playing here, so too in Fieldwork is interested in the conversational, and he balances both tasks with deftness and a quick intellect. His interactions with Lehman are high evolutions of the post-bop art form, reminiscent of the dances between Greg Davis and Jason Moran.

JASON FORREST SHAMELESSLY EXCITING

BY MARTIN LONGLEY

Jason Forrest recorded as Domea Summer until he expected himself action was threatened. Nevertheless, he's a very good guitarist from Brooklyn is still a fan of his Master period. Lately, he has been recording at his subtly named Cook Rock Studios in Berlin.

Forrest could easily be dismissed as a tasteless musician. It took a live showing to get me to listen more closely to his accelerated photomontage of sample theft. Belonging to the emerging genre of pub laptop, he is the first computer operator that I've seen taking breaks from his screen for a spell of running arpeggios in the moosep. Here's a last-side page layout, including the crowd with his unquestioning enthusiasm, purchasing the air and shaking his jellied body.

A cynical view would be that Forrest merely snatches elements of his favorite cruddy music

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Soundcheck

and bristly bangs them together into sped-up incantations, crammed with his own manic beat programming. But Forest actually has a hidden sensitive nature. Pajing attention to detail in his session process, he applies a delicate, surgical precision to his constructions. Poole Motel and mirrorball disco are his favorite areas to murder. He collages stunning, chopped and glitched riffs with tiny arcade game bells that might just be his own keypads.

Contributors, Czech-clutching vocal scratches receive the same treatment.

David Grubbs contributes piano to the opening "The Walls of the City Skale," but it's not a major part of this compacted wonderment. A popular Cook Rock Disco technique is to alternate folky acoustic guitar ditties with ramming Metal riffs. Like the title says, "My 36 Favorite Punk Songs" apparently does work, though said number is just over two minutes, and still doesn't sound too crowded.

Country singer Laura Cantrell guests on "Agitated and Headphones," Forest's bad for Top 40 success, even if its hellbilly idyll features a fair share of wailing beats and repeats. And Forest's other guest singer Mike Radtke closes the disc with a repetitive folk chime.

Forest represents a new generation of Philadelphia artists, an articulate conceptualist, hiding in a hooligan's frame

GATE TO GATE TURN BLACK KEYS

PROTECT CD

BY MARCO MASTERS

Though its catalogue numbers fewer than 20, Hollywood's PRCE is quickly becoming a vital suburban noise label. Enslitting efforts by Yellow Swans, Howl and Wolf Eyes' Aaron Dilloway have certainly started, but the best PRCE music to date is the digital debut of Gate to Gate, a collaboration between Mike Connolly (of Hair Police and now Wolf Eyes) and Howl's Geth. Turn Black Keys offers cuts from two limited-edition cassettes plus a new set of three limited-edition 12-inch records.

This life track denounces Turn Black Keys, running for a staggering 38 minutes. Somehow Connolly and Geth maintain forward momentum throughout, weaving abstract sounds into a noisy ride. Use a rollercoaster whirling through a blurry haunted house. The piece opens with rumbling thunder and distorted treble, then morphs into a jet engine roar similar to the shaking howl of *Planetarium*. A third of the way in, a hammered rhythmic jura through the dense surface. Most impressive is the track's unrelenting presence. The noise just keeps coming, refusing to pause for breath, the resulting effect is both penetrating and soothing. Its footage of a rolling ocean capable of blinding speed. Near the end, two streams bleed across the stereo space until the track finally collapses under its own frantic weight.

Two tracks from their Base cassette contain the assault, adding a heavy pulse that recalls Boredoms' Yamatsuka Eye at his most hysterical. Only on the first half of "House With The Clock in Its Walls" does space creep into Gate to Gate's wall of scratch, evoking a dubtron roar. Coming through at high intensity, it rattles randomly and echoes hypnotically. It's the most aggressive part of the album, but even the most suffocating stretches of Turn Black Keys are

enlivened by the track, until blood coursing through the group's irreducible veins.

CARLOS GIFFONI WELCOME HOME

PROTECT CD

BY MARCO MASTERS

With Menendez and De Bontis, his numerous solo albums with co-producer Joe Rausiello and Dylan Kopylov, and his genre-defining No Fun Festival, Carlos Giffoni has become one of the most vital voices in the gray American noise wheel. Since moving from Miami to Brooklyn a few years ago, the Venezuelan has been supremely prolific, but solo releases have been rare. Welcome Home represents three years of one-man sonic exploration, with 12 tracks of blindingly pure, surprisingly fertile sound.

Most of Welcome Home is aggressive, repetitive noise, which Giffoni denigrates tones and regenerates it's amazing how much sonic territory he can cover through simple, rapid-fire blasting. His hyper-jumping has precedents in the muscular crunch of Wolf Eyes, the bounding glitz of Shavo, even the dense shorn of Hecker and Fennell. But the intricate texture of Giffoni's abrasion disc is distinctive. His sounds are so fine and detailed they're nearly molecular, as if recorded through a microscope.

The opening track sets the album's frantic tone, thick static and fractal glitches pile into a towering mound. "Atrode Eaters" attacks the ears from all angles, like a hearing test, drenched to punish its patients, while the drifting bottles of "Expectations" feel roughly like stroking your head in the oar sail of an 80s video game. Later, the aqueous fidgets of the aptly titled "Synapses" resemble electric nerve fighting over a river of choice. The only relief from all this penetrating racket comes in two collaborations, "Infradited," a duet with Peter Rehberg, builds to a momentous hour, while "The Bold And The Mac," forged with fellow Old Bomb Don Felipe, battles compressive tones in warm distortion. Still, most of Welcome Home is like a new wave of the old wave, a new kind of old music, one that's unlikely but appears comparisons with Duke Ellington and Elia Evans. However, they're also inveterate improvisers, playing out live with an improvising computer word artist. If you own anything by Autotech or Seefee, you owe yourself a copy of this haunting, richly textured and multilayered music.

HISATO HIGUCHI 2004 11 2005 4

GHOSH DISC CD

BY JON KADLE

Though he has been recording for six years, Japanese musician Hisato Higuchi has released little music. So far he has produced one EP, Sine, and appeared on the RSP label's *Rakyo Raiback* 3 and *WORLD's Twenty Years/Two Second* compilations. This effort shows Higuchi's music, which is as gorgeous as patterns in static, and as muted as a stereo speaker bagged up in an eskinade.

2004 11 2005 4 is an appropriately provocative title for Higuchi's debut album, a collection of live recordings from the past year. The first three songs capture Higuchi alone with his guitar, snapping the thinnest two-chord blues patterns, putting them through a primitive sampling pedal and then pricing graceful slow threads of notes along the week horizon. The fourth, "Loren Corners," is both artists share a fondness for single-minded melodies that seem through an analogue recording fog like fish

through mazes. But Higuchi's touch leans less on traditionally emotive pop-style concepts like vibrato; instead, he draws each note from the instrument with minimum fuss. When he does shoot into more loaded spaces, as in the instrumental track that precedes the closing track "Manastazi," he still broadcasts from a clouded fog. Any accompaniment is sparse—Sadafumi Sagar collaborates on sampler for one piece, and Yoshihisa Suzuki's drumming adds slow, muffled strokes to the longest compositions on the disc. Set somewhere between Cancon's quavering blues and the cool light of Keji Hama's quietest guitar and voice recordings, Higuchi's music manifests a unique and singular conception. It breathes slowly, almost to the point of stillness, an eerie voice and flirty guitar searching for quiet revelation.

EZEKIEL HONK & MORGAN PACKARD EARLY MORNING MIGRATION

MICROSCOPIC MUSIC CD

BY JOHN GILL

This first collaboration by North Americans Honk and Packard has refused to give up its complexities after days of repeated playing. Ezekiel Honk confesses that the pieces on the CD are inspired by weather and nature, but also conceal a blizzard of musique concrete sources and treated domestic sounds that would have confounded a serial avant-garde nose trouble. Hong further garnishes these stuffs of the treated notes include dropped plastic bottles, rain, microphone stands falling over, crackling flies (shades of John Cage's *4x4=12*) and other imperceptible sound sources.

The first impression of the mesmerizing Early Morning Migration, suggested by sonorous trombone, guitar, bass and other conventional instruments, is that it is comparable to John Adams's early minimalist/electronic work, *Light Over Water*, but then the layers in Honk and Packard's work began to reveal themselves. They're already being remixed on the US electro underground scene. The beautiful aesthetic of the music, at the extreme unlikely but appears comparisons with Duke Ellington and Elia Evans. However, they're also inveterate improvisers, playing out live with an improvising computer word artist. If you own anything by Autotech or Seefee, you owe yourself a copy of this haunting, richly textured and multilayered music.

ICARUS CANALISQUE

NOT AN ANSWER CD

BY JOHN GILL

Here's something unusual — a live electronics recording that will make you choke, something that hasn't been done in the house/old scene AMM's *Was An Ordinary Enough Day* in Pueblo, Colorado. There are two possible explanations for this. One is that the duo of Olive Brown and Sam Britton are kids smart who have arrived at a solidifying appreciation of post-Dadaist electronics by accident. The other is that they are so steeped in Stockhausen, Cage, Boulez, Subotnick et al. that they can do this stuff in their sleep. Given that they called their last album *I Told The Baby Chicken I Supper* it's the latter. From the pre-recorded Brown and Britton set in motion, it's clear that they know their Xenakis and Gesang Der Jinglinge. But they're actually

reversing them in the manner of Boulez's *Phème Menard*, aspect of the identical. Don Quixote to the original — except they rewrite those 50s classics using new technology and dance beats. It has all those self-pop, guitars and squeals of electric, but fed through a dissonance sensibility that sometimes verges on the 'tenseness of harmonies (think of Omnis Coleman's *Dancing in New York*). But given that their packaging efforts is all about sensory trying the medium, the inspiration might in fact be Flann O'Brien.

JAN JELINEK KOSMISCHER PITCH

SCAPE CDLP

BY CHRIS SHARP

Jan Jelinek is a sonic butterfly fitting unpredictably from incantation to incantation, offering an unexpected shift of emphasis with each successive release. He's recorded as Garm and as Fesler, invented a fictional backing group (The Exposures) and embarked on a series of collaborative excursions — but, with the possible exception of 1-3-1-1 — made with the Australian electro/jazz combo Thrak — he hasn't quite made a completely satisfying record. Until now.

If not a companion piece as such, *Kosmoschischer Pitch* shares something of its approach with Jelinek's 1999 *Loop-Field Jazz-Rascals*. But whereas that album migrated on strutting out, atomized fragments of jazz, with surface noise, droplets and has treated as much a part of the source material as the music — *Kosmoschischer Pitch* is an altogether madder experience, inspired and informed by the cosmic music made in early 1970s Germany. Brigitte Daxen, Ash Le Tempel and Popo Vuh made some astonishing music, motivated in part by a yearning for transcendence and escape. Jelinek — constructing his music from digitally processed loops and the most microscopic of sampled snippets — assumes a similar sense of radiant progression and intensive bliss. The music is typically atmospheric, a slow-burning, stirred collage of pleasant triggers. Starting with half-saturated, percussive guitars and a serpentine loop of static, the track unfolds layer upon underlying layer of rhythmic noise as it gathers momentum, sweetened by ascending furies of birding ("in Desodolich") is groover still, as Jelinek makes daring, swirling white noise and richly balanced percussion with a cavernous two-tone organ drone worthy of Terry Riley.

During *Kosmoschischer Pitch*, there's often an arcane sense that these sturdy, often fractal constructions are somehow seductive, out there, and that the record is a floating point that merely suggests the overarching, resplendent whole. But more often still — as in the opening, surging "Universal Band Silhouette" — there's little more than simple physical acquiescence. Like the cosmic compositions it delicately references, *Kosmoschischer Pitch* is proof positive that the higher and lower pressures can triumphantly combine

THE KALLIKAK FAMILY MAYBIRD 2007

TOLL CALL CD

BY MATTHEW INGRAM

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Soundcheck

cinship and a superman musicality many recordings are doomed to grate. The solitary nature of the process often makes them simply isn't enough tension in the music. Perhaps Andrew Peterson, who dubs himself The Kallikist Family, realized this and thus brought in Phil Evans, Adam Finkler and Liam Singer to augment his one solo offerings.

July 23rd/2007: The music of Peterson's debut, according to a future label, but there's nothing more about the songs here, which more often than not strike an elegiac tone. Most closely approach death and a national effort as the excellent title track, "Second Phase," is built on a striding flurry of flamenco, prised somewhere between vibration and tone, and ruptured by interjections of fast machine gun drumming. It breaks suddenly into a hallowed funeral that recalls the abrupt shift between funeral frameworks in Carl's "Chain Reaction," before regrouping in "These Times" for one of the record's most unusual series of scenes. Here, sustained vocals deal with splintering drums. Unlike 3-one-breasts and a wildly enmeshed half-speed bass line.

Other highlights include the Vietnamese folk song "Portland Oregon Part 2," punctuated by clanging drums and machine-pair rhythm; and the snoring pluck drums and crisp metal clang of "Portland Oregon Part 4." But sadly Peterson's often sublime ideas get slightly lost in the fog of software synthesis. It'd be nice to hear some songs, more truly tones and a little more kindness and depth.

KINDS THE VERY LIFE OF ART

LOWENHARTY CD

BY BRIAN MARLEY

The group's name and the title of the CD come from a phrase coined by Henry James. "Everything," he wrote, "becomes interesting from the moment it has closely to consider... the law of its kind." Kinds are the very life of literature." Hennes Lashoff, whose group this is, translates Lashoff's art and his life into music, alternating traditional kinds of playing with unconventional practices. The idea is to create new forms with old means. So Lashoff uses electronics and sends his piano with various preamps, and slide guitar David Ikonzo includes unorthodox techniques such as finger behind the slide's chords and deploys plastic cups, rags, pencils and wires on his guitar. Such techniques are, of course, part of a well-established tradition of experimental music-making, and although new forms have emerged as a consequence of such activity, one is obliged to wonder whether Lashoff has advanced the tradition or merely added to it.

The theme of Ikonzo's "Woman's March" has the flavor of music from the region of the Upper Tigris, and the journey into and out of the melody involves low rumblings in the belly of the piano, various scarpings, stridulations and percussive activity in the instrument's interior, two brief auto double bass solos consisting of the trio's other member, Adam Tang, followed by a structured collective improvisation. Each of the players assumes at different times responsibility for the music's rhythmic momentum. Two thirds of the way through the piece, it shifts effortlessly into the swing of a mainstream jazz piano trio, which Ikonzo's guitar then comments

on and to some degree works against it. It's a richly varied piece that has a lot to commend it. "Aerobic!" begins with a lugubrious one-bass solo, gamelan-like rhythmic beats on the guitar, and, at the tail end of a section involving electronically slowed piano, long peds play the rhythm and carries it into open improvisation. The track segues into the electronic massed of "Soul Bussolero," over which Ikonzo lays a spirally noted, widely dispersed theme. "Dance," an abstract blues homage to Blind Boy Fuller, is perhaps the best of the four remaining tracks. The Very Life Of Art is well made and hard to dislike but, unfortunately, also hard to get enthusiastic about.

MIKE LADD MIKE LADD PRESENTS FATHER DIVINE

ROCK CD

BY BOB REVIEWS

One of the statements in the press material for Mike Ladd's Father Divine calls the East Coast musician and poet "Black music's Bed." The statement is both accurate and slightly misleading. Ladd, like Beck, is essentially a satirist. But while Beck's pop megalomania drives him to appropriate varied cultural cues, from the sea-eyed Nick Drake aesthetic of *Change* to the Spanish-swing Los Angeles of *Givers* to his fair parlor tricks, Ladd freestyles over psychedelic jazz, funk, lounge and hip-hop to communicate an awareness of socio-political trends. Unlike Beck, Father Divine isn't about personal commitment.

Having said that, Ladd's *Divine* isn't as heavy as some of Ladd's past works, which range from the pre-millennium triton of *Welcome 2 The Afterside* to the rapier interrob of *Nagafish*. Though it's a conceptual album that references the low-fi ROIR cassettes of the 80s, Ladd doesn't expound on content, verily dense themes here. At all, where he playfully ruminates over his "lateral cations" (or more accurately, "The supercity safety of my life so far"), and "Aerobic!" begins with his "Gotta get my channel to/Gotta get my channel from" and proclaims "Get to the top of the bag just to have some song," are both fairly casual plays. Several instrumental — from the massive dub reggae of "Black Rumba" (which draws strength from remixer Rex Maenno's use of waxes and echo) to the light new wave funk of "The Last C" — extend the 80s sonic homage.

Father *Divine* will probably stand as a howlingly bad minor work in the Ladd catalogue. Without the weight that anchored his previously released albums, it avoids slightly, it avoids it at times — which may be the point. It sounds as if he's having fun.

LICHENS THE PSYCHIC NATURE OF BEING

KRAVY CD

BY JON DALE

Lichens is the solo project of Robert Lowe, who sings and plays bass for American rock outfit 30 Day Men and guests on keyboards with TV on the Radio. The *Psychic Nature Of Being* is his first major project, consisting of three unrecorded compositions that clomp hard onto the horizontal fold, plotting their coordinates with the pulse of a soft, Lowe lows his own voice. He explains

its pre-syntactical notes and hurls inside a sampling device and lets them rag and grow at each other like a potting shed rendition of Robert Ashley's Automatic Writing, their slippery temporal lab objectively recalling Gaelic psalm singing. On "Kithen Aune," he strips spare folk melodies from an acoustic guitar. Spilling through his vocal repetitions, these melodic fragments feel like though they are lost in a legion of soft at the back of the month orbits.

The closing, 20-minute "No As Excessment, No Can Turn Yourself into Gold" is deeper still. Lowe interrupts his blood chants with a glided acoustic guitar interlude, which gives way to ponderously struck bells, suggesting private ritual space. Then he peels smoke rings from an electric guitar, tugging wide-eyed and sweet notes that spiral upward with the same benediction as in Daniel Felsenfeld's work on Pappi Viki's *Goer* or Vorn. The track tells a slithering properties left only half the story; what Lowe leaves the piece hanging, he has all but coaxed himself from reality.

ALVIN LUCIER WIND SHADOWS

NEW WORLD 2XCD

BY PHILIP CLARK

There's something of Alvin Lucier's most famous composition *An Airing in A Room about 40 Rooms* here, in which instruments are fed into a system simulating the acoustics of 40 differently proportioned spaces. Otherwise, this compilation focuses on three Lucier works anchored around the constant hum of pure wave oscillators.

A pure wave oscillator is an electronic glissmo with the potential to sustain a single note indefinitely although in his cogent eleventh-century Barton Workshop pianist and composer Frank Denyer debunks the idea that Lucier's music can be categorized merely as a series of quasi-scientific experiments. "Lucier's music is never 'explanatory' (the goal of science)," he explains, "but like all art 'revelatory'." In Mammoth Stuart Marshall (1993) is partly monumental and inevitably satirical as he has been dithering John Arden's 43 pitches against the pure wave oscillator. Performed as long sustained intervals, the pitches get with the oscillator to form a whole that's sculptural — the ear is obliged to engage with the space and dimensions of the sounds themselves because there's nothing else to hear. The British video artist Stuart Marshall died of AIDS at the age of 43 and Lucier creates a coolly dignified memorial.

In *Memoriam Joe Higgins* (1984) — this time John Anderson on normal channel — is more exacting as he has been dithering a spectrum of notes over the pure wave oscillator's sustained tone. Lucier chooses his corner pitches for maximum harmonic interference and "wobbling" — Denyer likes it to listening to a solar eclipse as two forces of nature pass each other. At the moment of maximum impact, the brightness and the force of the harmonic interference force your speakers to shake violently.

Q (1996), for a quietest of acoustic instruments, is a different apt on the same concept as the five instrumental pieces. Just their microtonal slides against the gravitational constant proceed by two pure wave oscillators. Lucier refreshes perceptible as your ears

become sharpened to the supple microtonal gradations he explores.

In *Fidelio* (1987) much the same effect is created by purely acoustic means, as violin and cello hover around a single piano note. For the other acoustic piece, *Letters* (1991), Lucier uses the pitch equivalents of letters to spell out in sound the note he sent to his friend Spine Nissen accepting the commission. It's dry and witty — an unexpected manner of pathos.

MEADOW HOUSE TONGUE UNDER A TON OF NINE VOLTERS

ALCOHOL CD

BY PHIL ENGLAND

Dan Wilson is one of a handful of teenage prodigies to whom the arts radio station Resistance FM has thrown up and extended a lifeline. His original Heshore Show and current Epitaph Time Shows are obvious signs of a man with too much time on his hands and an imagination that is running out of control. "Bonghe" collects 80 minutes' worth of Wilson's material songs together under a new moniker, *Meadow House*.

Wilson's arrangements are often a glorious collage of disparately tuned instruments and found objects, which include such inventions as stretch made of elastic bands and barbed wire, as well as tuned bottles, toy xylophones, empty oil cans and the like. A joyous cacophony they might be, but there's a little snoring that obstructs through the choice of congruent sound sources. It's as if the bested son of Brian Wilson and Harry Fielder were sitting at the controls. "Mekane On Sitar" — the centrepiece of the album — is like the Beatles at their most psychedelic but distorted in a way that sounds like the iron axon is seeping off the plastic tape.

The fistful richness of the dense arrangements is paired with lyrics, which range from sidestepping nonsense on "Pins And Needles" ("You've got me drinking hot stomach ache on my jumper/You've got me sneezing snowflakes on my jumper") to cerebral observations of the characters and subcultures of everyday life with twists in the tail. There are tasty electropop workouts — "Will U B My Friend" ("People tell me to get a life/You're trying to tell me to") and "Diao Vami" ("You're in the gutter covered with vomit/This is the future of disco") as is evocative of a night out at the club as Mike Skinner's "Blinked By The Lights" and much further. "Minger" is a song of appearance angst from teenage hinterland; and "The Perks", which appears to combine three songs in one, was one of the highlights of *My Friend* 122.

Notoriously prone to live performance, you're not likely to see him or *Later With Jools* anytime soon, yet his introverted and obsessive antipathy deserves a wide public airing. A more original album you're unlikely to hear this year.

MISHA MENGELBERG SENNE SING SONG

TADKID CD

BY DAN WARBURTON

It's appropriate that this 70th birthday tribute to Dutch pianist Misha Mengelberg from Tadkik's John Zorn is longstanding fan club comes with a track that appeared on the first album. Mengelberg appeared on back in 1984 — Eric Dolphy's *Last Date*. The affectionate twiddle he



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While Giffoni has been busy organizing the
No Fun Festivals and collaborating with the
likes of Thurston Moore and Jim O'Rourke,
he's been slowly recording this debut album.



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for fans of Sunny Day, Burzum, Mogwai,
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inserts into the theme of "Hypocrite/Reverend" (originally "Hypocrite/Reverend") as like a convincing wink to an old friend. On this, his third Zoro-produced two album after 1994's *Who's Bridge* (Aunt) and 1997's *No Idea* (DIN), the bassist is once more Greg Cohen, but the drumset here is occupied by Ben Peroway, best known for his work with Uri Caine.

Saxophonist Mahat's work has surprised us by finding a number of Mingus standards crop up ("Reel Kind Kneels", "Broomfield"), most of them plodding amply along at the pianist's too familiar slightly stodgy midtempo. The element of danger comes not from the music's lurking about on the edge of the abyss plunging into total disintegration (though many infamous Mingus outbursts, notably where he's joined by Has Benoit on drums, have indeed gone right over the edge), but from the pianist's unusual ability to find the right wrong notes and follow them wherever they lead. Mingus's sparring openness can either try and tag along, hoping they'll eventually find their way back to the fold, or sit doggedly on the changes and wait for time to drift back, which he invariably does, albeit often when they're lost expecting it. Cohen and Peroway are remarkably good at doing both. Mingus's music remains a quintessential example of how recognizable idioms — from the pianist's beloved baroque counterpart to the Ellingtonian bare fifts left hand plunks and Monkish whole tone lines — can be extended and subverted in an authentic, live de notes of the highest order. For all its whimsical humor, *Senza Sang Song* is both musically profound and perfectly musical.

ROMAN MINTS GAME OVER

OMNITRAX CD
BY LOUISE GRAY

It's a surprise that the splendidly named Roman Mints signs off his deventures to *Game Over* with a wistful admission: "This is" he waxes referring to an album comprising mostly of pieces dedicated to him, "probably as close as I will ever get to being a rock musician." Which begs the question: how easily does Mints expect a rock album to sound like? Even in their most purple moments, Radiohead don't go for the kind of violent upheavals conjured up here.

In its use of solo violin and electronics, *Game Over* is a virtuoso album. Mints is a Russian-born violinist who has studied and worked in London for some years, during which he has established himself as one to watch on the contemporary classical scene. Mints is joined by a bit, but their place seems often to define the sonic space from which he can escape. Containing as works by four composers — Eli Bennett, Armin Vosseler, Tomas Buekner and Alexander Rakhlin — *Game Over* is an elemental place, deconstructed not only by high drums, but also delicacies. Mints has us wait for the latter. Rakhlin's 13 minute *Cryptophonic* Piece pits electric plectro playing against a storm of electronics. Eli Bennett's *Strong Factory* has a pulsating, skittery melody of sorts rhythmically blown away by gusts of incense sound, before, in its closing minutes, allowing a high register violin line to work itself out. It's the luminous nature of Buekner's *Largo Recitativo*, an instrumental that, for the first time, allows tenacity into the album that is most captivating,

and it is this harmonic space that lingers, even after the journey of Vosseler's title work has died away.

MOONDOG MOONDOG

HONEST JONAS CD
BY NICK SOUTHGATE

Born in Kansas in 1919, Louis T Hadin became MoonDog, the street musician and landmark, when he moved to New York in the 1940s. Blinded in an accident in his teens, he wrote music in braille and made his own instruments. He played the dragon's teeth drum and tinbina on the corner of 54th St and Avenue so regularly the spot became known as MoonDog Corner. His collection spans from his earliest 78s at the tail end of the 40s through to the recordings made after he moved to Germany in 1974 in the 25 years before his death. Most, however, are from the late 50s and 60s when Beats and hippies adopted the hobnob composer as an icon. He appeared with Allen Ginsberg, Leney Brice, William Sarraghis and Tiny Tim. Charlie Parker wanted to record with him. His philosophy of "maximum effect with minimum means" inspired Philip Glass and Steve Reich.

Although self-taught, his compositions are full of informed formal experimentation. The discipline in his music inspired conductor Arthur Rodniski to ask MoonDog into Carnegie Hall from his regular spot outside to sit in on rehearsals. The exploration of rhythm is best exemplified by "Thum One To Nine". As drums ripple in the background, the hand-drum moves from 1/4 time through to 9/4 time. As MoonDog explains in an introductory monologue that demonstrates the quarter beat variants of the 27 tempos he plays in, Compositions like "Rimshot" and "Basketball Rhythm" are stark but sinuous percussion pieces, the live pulse of New York violin clatter and steam mechanics ("Tag On The Hudson" opens with the howling of near shipping). His vocalizing, harmonizing with himself in the studio, is a place as "All is Love" or "Why Spent The Dark Night With You". The combination of primitive percussion and timeless folk melodies, often performed as duets, would not be out of place on any of the plethora of free folk and psych folk releases around today. The three dance tracks on this compilation are a compelling invitation to wander further and longer in MoonDog's trail.

MURCOF REMEMBRANZA

THIS LIPS LIPS CD
BY MARTIN LONGLEY

Fernando Corone was born in Tijuana, Mexico, but this second disc is aimed to coincide with a move to Barcelona. Recording as Murcof, his follow-up to 2002's *Martes* takes that album's minimalist laptop fundamentals and polishes further, honing and refining carefully. Murcof's pieces run together like a suite, making variations on a similar theme. Despite this homogeneity, you experience so tedium while listening to these vast unrep. Murcof sustains a brooding, portentous mood, a character of tranquil rumination.

Murcof's ongoing bass drum foundation is oddly mouse-like, though panned back and remote. His infinitesimal textures work on a near subliminal level. The three-part "Rozar"

introduces the piano, contrasting a flowing chamber instrumentation with electronic jittering. Murcof's skeletal rhythms tend to pad along the corridors secretively. "Reflexo" features a nagging dance figure, repeated at strategic moments, then the last two tracks increase the laptop bass, hosting the beats into privacy with "Rozar" enjoying a jury-maintenance and "Canna" surging with an aggressively low baseline, the strings arranged to sound like a waltz.

Murcof's primary technique is to keep his electronic input trimmed down to a bare minimum of pocks, clicks, dunks, blips, emissions, swirls, spirals and bass eruptions, setting down these carefully restrained elements on a bifurcated pillow of stroking and swooping string arrangements. His judgment is extremely precise. The balance is perfect.

NO NECK BLUES BAND THE COLLECTIVE IMAGININGS OF YAGTEREINE, COOK & CO

SOUND BY TIGERMEINER CD
BY EYON GILLY

One day after GW Bush was elected to office in 2004, The No Neck Blues Band had a kind of ecoroom/performance in NYC's Greene Naftali Gallery. There was a ritual enactment, there was an object to contemplate, and there was music. The event soon became legendary, and the sounds have been documented in high style and released in a very cool gallery edition.

With a so much rock snobber going on these last few years, it's sometimes hard to remember how important No Neck were to the beginning of this trend, and how essential they have remained as innovators. Their releases can be very obscure, but there isn't one of them that hasn't festered me — their sound is always evolving.

The Collective Imaginings is a suite broken into eight parts. All instrumental, some of the pieces, like "The Blunder I Got", are built of onomatopoeic tones and sounds and dattering percussion. You can almost feel the eel spit of Bush being torn apart by critics. Others, like "The Quicker The Police Shave You", were around like polka-dotted drunk on power only to find their toasts seized away by manic guitar parts that wind tighter and tighter until all heads pop like grapes. But it's all very beautiful, abstract, powerful and capable of transporting you pretty far away from reality if you let it.

The packaging is great too — a nice gallery folder with a Christopher Wool print in a fading pocket. And if you think that by playing this magical CD you might be putting another nail into the coffin of GW, well, what's not to like?

TUJIKO NORIKO BLURRED IN MY MIRROR

ROOM40 CD
BY DAVID STUBBS

Osaka based Tujiko Noriko has been compared to Mimi and Björk, but *Blurred In My Mirror* makes a mockery of such vague referencing. Lush and glitter-aided, electronic and eclectic this album may be, but the process of soundfile exchange that took place between Noriko and producer Uwe Kasper, credited with the bulk of the music, has resulted in an album that slips through the nets of modern genre.

Opener "Wagana Hospital" uses Noriko sang in English for the first time — well, not so much sang

as ramble a disturbing tale of romantic, psychotic obsession, in what sounds like a heavily drugged monotone. It's as if she's drifting in and out of consciousness beneath dizzying stringbeats and swirling voices, with ritual injections of rhythmic cymbal in like chessmen.

"Tablet For Memory," significantly the only track in which English is involved, is peripheral, is only very time when *Burned In My Arms* strakes into complex, Post-rock-style tropes. Thereafter, the text, gapping uninvolved or of the genre is sustained — seductive, yet tense. With its lethargic saxophone and dubiously hallucinogenic ambience, "I'm Not Dreaming" is like a transcription of the workings of the subconscious: "Switch Off The Sun" circles around what turns like the rusty remains of ancient Coteaux Sains (its), while "Wages And Mornings" is indeed 1966-like, not in the mannered and historic sense but in that Nono has transformed into an Army of His, with broken up, mismatched vocals floating free like so many lacrimas, as somewhere down below guitarist Benjamin Thompson strums desperately on an acoustic guitar as if his hands have been tethered to the instrument. *Burned In My Arms* is the result, happily, of far too much processing.

NURSE WITH WOUND ECHO POEM: SEQUENCE NO 2

UNLIMITED JAVNA CD
BY PHIL ENGLAND

Ireland's one-man surrealist theatre troupe Steve Stapleton continues to pull rabbits out of his hat. A one line skein reveals that the inspiration for his latest project is Alan Resnais black and white 1961 film, *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* (Last Year At Marienbad) about a stranger pursuing an affair with a married woman in an old hotel. Echo Poem: Sequence No 2 is a minimal work in that the only sound sources are the French language voices of Anastasia Dehan Steiner and Isabelle Gaborit. Their sung lines have the quality of something sung softly and slowly, or possibly, they speak texts, whisper and breathily utterances in somewhere between sensuality, intimacy and interior monologues.

Stapleton layers these fragile vocal fragments into a hypnotic web, occasionally panning them from one extreme of the stereo field to the other while a gentle background drone hovers almost imperceptibly in the background. His non-linear arrangement — things keep coming around — has the effect of lulling you into a liminal belief. It is further evidence, following on from last year's *Shipwreck Radio*, that despite occasional releases his fair as a producer can audio deliver and his ability to be conspicuous outside of conventions and trip us into the extra-real-elsewhere, remain largely undiminished.

OCS 3 & 4

NARINACK 2XCD
BY MARC MATTES

Guitarist and singer John Dwyer is best known as the leader of noise-rock juggernaut Coathwips, but his side project OCS (with Barrie drummer Patrick Mallory) is actually more prolific. Last year's 2 limited 22 songs in 32 minutes, and 3 & 4 (two separate albums released together) offers 26 more in about an hour. Where Coathwips' music is relentlessly abrasive, the

songs of OCS are unwaveringly distant, always playing calmly in a far-off production fog. This restraint makes OCS attractively elusive. Even on Dwyer's flattest songs, the needed quality of his music is enticing.

3 & 4 is dominated by Dwyer's subdued voice. Often his vocals are so delicate and airy he sounds like the ghost of a child, and his music has a nursery rhyme feel, infused with the simplicity of songbook folk. Much of 3, which is subtitled *Songs About Death & Dying Vol 3*, is eerily innocent, with a clown's knock for morbid cuteness and cheeriness into one hair-raising effort. "Hey Kid" weaves acoustic guitar through bawdy barking sounds, while "Split The Lake" slips a sneaky melody into a field of radio-like static. The record's highlight, "I Am Slow", is like an ancient tune plucked from an overgrown graveyard. Dwyer's succinct lyrics are consistently ringing, but 3 suffers slightly from a blurry sameness. Only a few tracks deliver surprises beyond their initial structures.

4 (synonymously subtitled *Get Stowed*) is less predictable, with more rhythmic verve and instrumental curvaceous. Mallory's chunky drumming is enlarged, and Dwyer's adept guitar poking awells accordingly. "Friends Of St Thomas" and "Along The Way" use small electronic blasts to throw the teetering rhythms off-kilter, and "Come On My Mind" thrusts forward due to Mallory's stomping pulse. Later a cover of Donovan's "Get Thy Bearings" builds kinetic energy through persistent steps and starts. Throughout, Dwyer paints a unique brand of dreamy blues that, after four solid albums, is pretty much his to patent.

HANS OTTE ORIENT-OCIDENT/MINIMUM: MAXIMUM POCUS CD

BY JULIAN CONWY

Hans Otte, now approaching 80, studied composition with Paul Hindemith and piano with Walter Gieseking. From 1959 until 1984 he was music director at Radio Bremen, possessing awareness of innovative work by the likes of John Cage and David Tudor. In his own writing and performance, he has generally cultivated forms of simplicity associated with receptiveness to spiritual influences. His best known keyboard work, *Das Buch Der Klänge* (The Book Of Sounds) was praised for its prayer-like qualities by the great Indian singer Pandit Pan Nati. His *Altagesang*, commissioned by radical violinist Malcolm Goldstein, drew inspiration from Zen.

The two works on this new release of old material reveal a further aspect of his compositional activity, encompassing sonic tapestries emerging from an idiosyncratic blend of sound sources.

Minimum/Maximum (1973) is billed as a 40 minute environment for two organists, recorded simultaneously in Stockholm and Bremen. The players are Karl-Erik Nelin and Gerd Zachar. The music mixes voices and breathy exhalations, phrases repeated with variation on metallophones, percussive organ and harpsichord and electric whirling that resembles the frenetic tread of metal serpents elastic the text to German. The overall effect is dream, dreamlike and strongly absorbing. *Orient/Occident* (1977) is an 11 minute work performed by oboe and clarinet players across a tape of overland and

burbling electronic streams. The combined impact of cool sustained instrumental tones and agitated bubble is hypnotic and compelling. I'm reminded of Arvo Pärt's "magical garden" compositions, in that Otte's pieces appear to be governed by a logic entirely their own, occupying their own distinctive spaces.

ANDREW PEKLER STRINGS + FEEDBACK STARKGOLD CD

BY SUSANNA GLASER

Despite the cold, mechanistic nature of the imaginary circuit diagram on the cover, Berlin based Californian Andrew Pekler's contemplative recordings on his third album are steeped in warmth. Pekler manipulates tiny eyedrop samples — mostly strings and piano fragments extracted from Morton Feldman's work in the 1950s — into fragile, otherworldly sound sculptures.

While the cover diagram is suggestive of the structured (if complex) nature of electronic music, *Strings + Feedback* is compelled by its own inner dynamics, floating effortlessly on soundwaves of its own making. Notes seem to slow down, speed up, shiver, rattle, twist and hum of their own accord, as if Feldman's role is to nurture net create, to guide not rule.

Although each of the ten compositions work individually, they're also clearly part of a whole, a series of mood vignettes with the same underlying connective tissue. The melodious heartbeat and stilled chords of space "Pluck" are juxtaposed with the dissonant free-floating pipes, organs and gusts of the serene "Landscape", but we are nevertheless travelling along the same path.

Similarly, the hiccupping rhythm of "Refusenik", where nachos appear to tip to elicit responses from each other, sits comfortably next to the feedback-driven, squally build of dissonant textures of "Doubtless", while the dusty, film noir moments of "Cygnus" are still made up of the same DNA as the dulled texts and babbled noise soundscapes of "No". Clinging on the typewriter "Dragnette", where burnt strings wobble themselves into its shuddering and swooping layers, the listener is left in mid-air, mesmerized. *Strings + Feedback* conjures a sense of childish wonder at the beauty of sound itself. The ghost in Pekler's machine is very much alive.

TOM RECCION SOUNDTRACKS TO A COLOR: GOLD & BLACK NO LABELS CD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

John Cage once remarked that the albums documenting his presentation of Variations IV at a Los Angeles gallery in the early 1960s should really be treated as postcards that had been sent from the event. It's an apt analogy. Recordings made of — or in this case, for — a particular performance or installation tend, like postcard greetings sent while on holiday, to be simultaneously intimate and distant, exotic yet banal. Like the shell you pick up on the beach that never looks quite so sparkling or attractive when you get it home. Soundtracks to A Color: Gold & Black was an environment created by sound artist and scenarist How contributor Tom Reccion at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in 2004. It consisted of 2000 poems,

The Wonderful World of Innova Recordings



410

THE HENRY BRANT COLLECTION, VOL. 3



622

MUSIC OF GERALD BUSBY



642

ELECTROPOLIS



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Gudrun Gut

The new single by Berlin's **Gudrun Gut**, *Move Me/Thomas Fehrmann Tango Shuffle Remix* (Einsinger Jukebox 7") is one of the best as-Malefai* records I've heard in a good while. The basic pop on the A-side has to do with some sort of dub-whoa-tango aus through layers of effect and pudding. Thomas Fehrmann's remix is good, too, but almost exasperated, since the original is so bland.

Really nice single from Chicago's **Anomaly** (Unltd) (SGE 7") takes some basic electronic post-hip mechanics and adds a lot of interesting piano, string and horn stuff (real or imagined, I don't know) in a way that recalls early DJF dream music of the first order. The two instrumentals work along like traces of faint memories, while evoking very pleasant ones. And just wait till you hear the title Monster Vocoder take.

No real info on the release by **Bla-Muse**, but they thoughtfully provided a bag of tea so that you can have something to sip while pondering their origins. And ponder we must. Occasionally in *A Way/Don't Hum We (No Label 7")* is an interesting and thoroughly eclectic offering by the rootless trio. Textured vocals, balustrade drumming, electronics, guitars and more collide here in extremely interesting ways. Even when their sound is a little slack and dark there's a lot of stuff going on here — reminiscent, in a way, of classic Rutles-era Chicago splashing and beats edged with concrete. We could all do worse. And don't forget the tea.

Yellows Swans have yet another release out today, and again it's pretty much a same ol' ol'. *Alchemical/Sunday/Oh! The Czar* (Ouch!bamb A 7") is wild mix of power-credited vocals, chirring electronics, highly attenuated guitar and the assertion of lives lived beyond the call of bell or tase. Like some of their Midwest brethren, the California unit takes a completely wasted approach to post-core dynamics. They install the an asured them into something very special, and this is one of their best.

Joe Seaman is best known for his drumming inside the French/Euro Industrial/avant spectrum (Van Maguet, Art Zoyd, etc.), but he has a long history of solo electronic work using the name **Nimic**. *Personal Plot by Nimic* (Tale [Three 3" CD) comprises three tracks of this. By turns atmospherically bubbling or propulsively engorged, the music here is surprisingly engaging and makes an excellent backdrop for shoving over the densest part of Swiss. Believe me, I know.

By doing a real good job hybridizing CB6, the A sound, Pretenders and whatever, Briton's **More Real** have created one of the best recent

pop singles that wasn't by Yo La Tengo. Kind Of Bator/Snaple (Smile [Pias 7") slides through genres with the same knowing glee as YLT at their most crowd pleasing. Should we expect a Stephen Paster guest spot in the near future?

A duo of obscure musical pedigree, France's **Les Poissens Artificiels** do a rather nice job of mixing assemblé with electronics, concrete and other smirking textual voices. Some of *Sourdis* (Noyde Exclnt 3" CD) is dreamy and subtle, some other parts have a solemn chamber feel, but there are almost always the slight sense that anxiety is pressing against the frames of the main image, that something is very somewhere. And that's a nice feeling to have.

Ratelli Su Ne Pot Ruga is a collaborative project between Romanian scratch composer Ivo and Justin Waggan from the great Dreams Of All Buildings. They've just released a colour-coded set of three discs — *Camera Comuna*, *Light Avonion* and *Word White Feathers Fall All Across the Country* (Experimental Seaford 3+3" CD), all of which are excellent. They combine the quiet sweep of CDDB's epic quartets with glitchy found-sound rumination and other surgically meditative noise trapes. My favourite may be *Camera Comuna*, due to its heavy use of ready-made piano experiments, but I'm sure that *Light Avonion*, with its analogue bell tones, will have its proponents as well. Anyway, the whole set looks and sounds as nice as a nude walk into the sand.

Italian polymath **Giuseppe Spadola** (later periphrast) release is the no. 1 C age (1) *Magisto* (Ubiago Editions 3" CD) which has been mostly described as a minimal electronic piece. Perhaps our copy has been mispackaged somehow, because the single seems minute piece here sounds like nothing but solo piano. It's a lovely, well-spaced set of notes, both abstract and lyrical, in the great tradition of Saxe and his bearded 15. (BC)

Low AF Audio (Foe/Foe Translators 10") is a limited edition of 500 blue vinyl 10", featuring a side echo by Leeds's **Vibacathedral Orchestra** and the rejuvenated **Telescope**, one time Claxton Records recording artists and Spacemen 3 disciples, both recorded live at the Audioscene Festival that took place in Oxford in 2004. The *Vibacathedral* side is one of their worstest to date, with the usual celestial rainbow tones abandoned in favour of a huzz of intricate electricity and some grunged Northern vocal snarl from Neil Carpoll. The *Telescope* side is even more abrasive, with the kind of subtle guitar manipulation the faded Dean Roberts-led projects *Via Thela* and *White Winged Moth* extended into new zones of drone.



It's a good pairing, making the package is a keeper. (DK)

Far from stereotypical representations of the group as one-dimensional plagiarists, **Stereolab** have always been aesthetically voracious, translating avant garde warring practices down from music's forgotten histories into new pop anthems. The group's trademark is immediately recognizable even as they shift into new territory, as on *Hybernated/Babylon Pt 1/Pt 2* (Too Pure 7"), where they stretch looped choruses of Laetitia Sadier's averted vocals over curdled splits of electronics and a glorious metronomic pulse. Imagine the T Rex rhythm section backing The United States Of America.

Plastic Mite/1 Mias A Sundry Rhythms (Too Pure 7") is the latest arresting of these three new singles, with the group on autopilot through two slots of Stereolab pop formalism. While they are lovely songs, they lack the inspired sideways moves — Korner's sound-track tributes, dual-mono recording processes — taken on recent albums *Sound Cure* and *Marguerite Eclipse*. For the side of *Interplay/Voyageur Road Maps* (Too Pure 7") Stereolab set forth on a motorik-Motown groove before effortlessly slipping into an expanse upon the proto-disco theme they first explored on instant CD in *The Lowerside* ("Mass Riff"), the lipside splits its personality near its end and shapes itself into an elegant, bassy waltz. These singles are all identifiably Stereolab, but one of the signs of a truly great group is the ability to fly endlessly on as ever changing seas.

3 Funks are a new two featuring Netel New Zealand reissue. Donald Mitchell, Sander Lab Technicians cosponsor Tim Cornelius and United Fairy Moors label head and ex-Capitol member James Carlin. Their second title *Firewood* (Melanym 3" CD) is a great set of mostly acoustic sound miniatures. Where many of their live playing companions go for electrification and rock density, or the mapping of aggressive dance movements, 3 Funks rely on relaxed, almost hesitant interplay between scraped and plucked strings and playful, toy-like wind instrumentation. Occasionally they work up a head of steam, such as the floppy clouds of keyboards that swirl within "Mistral", but for the most part the sound is natural and quite lovely, a series of simplistically effective echoes on chuffed walls.

Burrow deep into the English underground and soon enough you will encounter Pat Todd, either due to a prodigious history of more than 150 groups and albums, his first label and most prolific: Being Welcomes *Carthi Drivers*, or his main project **Ashbury Navigations**. Or his

fondness for Nuhar Brothers films. His recent self-released disc *Aurora Grease Sweeneyhoe* (Memors Of An Aesthete 3" CD-R) is bewilderingly good. Todd's aesthetic leads toward disorienting juxtaposition and the leisurely development of sheer sonic overkill. You can hear this on "Can I Dialectics Break Bread?", where the chiming of toy bells is swarmed by wisps of girly, buzzing guitars, the cumulative intensity of the high level hum and metallic scrobble that drums through "Two Chinos For Tuesday" makes way for the near apocalyptic heavy rock sound of "A Four Foot Banana". More broken equipment rumbling from the boy that Stoke-On-Trent couldn't keep.

The folks behind the Background Frequencies series of latex-cut singles have signed off on their project with a split release from **Castings** and I entitled *Drums Driven*, *Days To The Sky* (Steadystate 7"). Castings, a multi-limbed outfit that hovers between Sydney and Newcastle, Australia, gave a fairly blunt of subliminal civility on their contribution "No Puppets, No One", there is something refreshingly neo-pop about their approach to such bourgeois notions as programming the drum machine.

They squeeze a lurching gat from the instrument, which they subsequently efface with red-eyed squirts of analogue synthesis. Low level hum as unknown, unidentifiable sounds guide the composition. Flip the record for "It's Beehive" and things get palpit, with the Melbourne two-piece handing miniature melodies for a brittle guitar over closing, impenetrable drums. It sounds too good rock at first blush, but the subtle charm of its music transcends that tired, fossilized genre, particularly when "Beehive" unravels to a quietest period of reflective drone, with the odd bit sounding out as underwater navigation.

Back to Sydney, where we would have found the heretic **Anthony Guarna**, had he not just relocated to Tokyo for an indefinite stretch. His newest solo title *Kingsfords* (If I Walk Into 3" CD-R) had its genesis in suburban Ashfield, however, so I imagine Sydney can still do it. Guarna as its own. Guarna's music moves all over the shop but lately he has been working on his most personal formations to date, embracing melancholy figures for ten fingers. The four unruffled pieces on *Kingsfords* if drag bees across slack guitar strings as Guarna captures the most girgious loops, accumulating mountains of dry notes like piles of needles and pins, over which he sounds weightless, rootless, like a shy, exhausted Richard Youngs. (DJ) Reviewed by Byron Coley, Jon Dale and David Keenan

half that number being gold and the other half black, that covered two rooms. A similar number of CDs containing separate soundtracks for each room were given away along with the posters. The result of any individual random-produced poster was that it was likely that someone somewhere grabbed, placed on the associative power of these two colours nearly reverses the postcard analogy in a very real sense, sending off the card in the end. Roach's skill with logic, found recordings and manipulation of repeated sounds is already well known, and his clearly adjust enough to establish a distinctive timbre for each of his recordings. The black and gold tracks seem and glitter, although with random rants, persuasive aphorisms and bright airy notes. The black track swirls over a pronounced undernote. A string bass scratches away with barely identifiable woodwinds and whine. Make if it what you will, Soundtracks To A Color – in a remarkable act of association – is as much your show as it is Roach's.

STEVE REICH
YOU ARE (VARIATIONS)

BY LOUISE GRAY

One characteristic of all Steve Reich's output — whether you choose the pared-downness of an early tape and clapping work like *It's Gonna Rain* or the ambitious mass theatre represented by a performance like *The Cave* — is that phrases are meaningful. Phrases — bytes of rhythm, of melodic change, of vocal text — have always provided the foundation stone of his work. It's possibly a mission why repetition is so important, because, once established, each phrase becomes something else. It's reinforced by reiteration: it's posited by counterpoint; its relationships are rotated through harmonic cycles.

You Are (It's no surprise that with his four-member You Are Nations). Reich is sticking to what works best. Premiered in 2004 (and in that year's version of the first time by the Los Angeles Master Chorale under Gert Gerber), each variation has its own start text, their authors two rabbis, Wigenstein and God – all possessed of a certain authority. The surprise, though, is how much variation Reich allows himself here – there's a real pleasure to be had in experiencing the agility of the music. So in the first variation, the one that takes as its text an 18th century Hasidic aphorism, "You are whatever your thoughts are," incorporates quotes from a 19th century monophonic song entitled "Hormie Ann." Elsewhere there are, the composer suggests, hints of James Brown. As ever, the structural expression of You Are is overwhelming. At times, its canonical forms link up as if they were emphatic statements of logical argument. However, the sensory encounter with the music is just as strong, as is a dominating presence – four pianos, rainmakers, vibraslap – cues under the rhythmic track. In my opinion, this is Reich's best. Reich has his vocalized shmirer with a typical classed trump and karmay arrangement that makes much out of the brevity of their base material.

From 2003, Cole Counterpoint, the 11 and a half minute work for eight cello (or one cello and seven pre-recorded ones) is here played for the musician it was written for, Maya Beiser. It is Reich says, the most cerebral of his

counterpoint work, and his first for the single instrument. The piece certainly travels great distances – the repetitive motifs are there, but so too is an interest in a soundworld that abates the eternal – and it's testimony to Besser's art that the listener doesn't get run down by its cease rhythms.

STEVE RODEN
ORDER DELIAS OR BUTTERFLIES
New York

INFO

On 8 April, Steve Roden dreamt he was in a restaurant where he ordered a dish called *Older Delia's*, which he vaguely recalled as consisting of "ice forms floating in broth". When invited to inaugurate Herbert Field's new *Non Visual Objects* project, whose aesthetic and typology owe much to Bernhard Götzky's *tennis crescent*, on which label Fred and Genter recently collaborated on *Astraea*, Roden suggested the name of his imaginary culinary specificity as a title. Fred recognised 'older' as German, but mistakenly assumed 'delia's' had something to do with *delicious*. Hence the title.

If the slowest (and this review) dwell on the anecdote, it's simply because there's so little to say about the music other than providing a bald description of the 40-minute piece, which progresses from diminished to minor to major tonalities and back again in a series of dovetailing sections approximately five minutes long. Roden's sound material is at times recognizable – in addition to his beloved gongs and chimes, a bamboo flute made for him by Glimmer adds a vaguely sensual colour to the proceedings – but often inarticulate. Strange yet fascinating montages of tinkling percussion float above tiny, sninking loops of distant vaguely nostalgic chord sequences, filtered until they crumble into dust like the skeletons of choral waves.

But none of this explains why this elusive yet far from inaccessible music is so strongly moving. Like Gótzter's work, it remains coolly objective, giving no apparent indication of any personal emotional significance for the composer, while provoking in the listener an intimate and deeply felt response.

OLAF RUPP/TONY BUCK/
JOE WILLIAMSON
MEIRD MEARDONS

WEIRD WEAR

This is an intentional trio, brought together in Berlin three years ago, largely by chance but also clearly by strong creative empathy. Probably the only familiar name here is that of percussionist Tony Buck, who's also one third of Australian longform minimalists The Necks. He is robust company on *Wind Weapons* as well, anchoring guitarist Olaf Rupp, a 42-year-old German who has worked with Butch Morris and Lili Coehli, among others, and Canadian bassist Joe Williamson, whose session credits are even more impressive.

Together, they make a quiet, subtly shifting free music that draws heavily on Rupp's highly individual technique and Buck's ability to invest free metre with a sense of overarching order. Williamson is in some respects the least obvious element, but also arguably the most creative, finding stable points in the convoluted but

between his two partners to execute some beautiful playing.

Though no one will need much in the way of metaphor to get a purchase, Bacik's analogies with postcards, 3D imagery and digital pixels are entirely apposite to this music, but he keeps revising the analogy and eventually comes up with "the trio seen as a large quiet organism made up of millions of restless cells all working together." That's as close as anyone is going to get. Some of these sounds seem involuntary and glibster rather than 'performed'. They have an organic unity in diversity that draws powerful logic from just a few stem-cell figures and shapes.

Wend Weppers contains just two long tracks, coming in at 34 and 24 minutes. The titles, "Naugahyde" and "Spandex", suggest yet more imagery: modern, flexible fabric that resists the stain of generic obviousness and the nip of analysis. If Emerson remains associated in some minds with archiving British Improv, this should be enough to confirm that Marlin Davidson continues to look for fresh new sounds and faithfully delivers them.

**GEORGE RUSSELL/LIVING
TIME ORCHESTRA
THE 80TH BIRTHDAY CONCERT
CONCEPT PUBLISHING 2002D**

BY NEIL MACDONALD

Though no one made much of it, the 2003 tour marked another important anniversary as well, the half-century of George Russell's hugely influential *The Lydian Chromatic Concept Of Tonal Organization*. Unlike the *hocus paucis* of hermeneutics, these are ideas that you can study and apply, and they're sunk deep, possibly too deep for visibility into contemporary musical culture, surfacing everywhere from Miles Davis's 'new direction' to Michael Jackson's "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'". So why isn't Russell better known and why wasn't this birthday tour more of an event, the way Gil Evans's 75th was?

The question's not quite answered by these four magnificent compositions and arrangements. There's nothing outwardly intruding about Russell's charts. It's just that, obsessed as we are with small groups, we've lost the ability to hear the stars of detail, the countering movements of scales and harmonic equations in big band music, a bit like you lose your sense of direction and awareness of topography if you never climb out of the car.

Russell makes it easy by starting with an excerpt from Liszt's *Die Science*, a mini-concerto for trumpet and Paule Nickselborg. His harmonic understanding — or, rather, his Lydian Chromatic understanding — is acute and even in this short lyrical introduction he demonstrates the deep structure of a deceptively straightforward piece.

The orchestra, liberally sprinkled with Brits, proceeds with *Electronic Sonata For Souls Loved By Nature*, the 1969 suite that helped to launch Jan Garbarek as a superstar. Here, it's Andy Sheppard who catches the spotlight, two excellent features bracketing the work from Eutaw Hise Hornshuke and demomyst/bass clarinetist, Pete Hurt. Nakkelsborg comes in again towards the end, less certain in a role originally taken as record by Manfred Mann.

Disc two is dominated by Russell's evolutionary epic *The African Game*. It's a less apocalyptic work than, say, Charles Mendis's *Rhithacanthus*.

Erectus. No accident that Russell invokes nature so often. His interest lies in ongoing process rather than packaged eschatology or genre. Read *The Lydian Concept* alongside O'Arcy Thompson's *On Growth and Form* and the parallels are unmistakable.

Shopper again solos prominently with another fine spot from Mikkelborg on "Consciousness", a telling cogitation from Chris Boscoe on "Cartesian Man" and a suitably sanguine/questioning coda from keyboardist Steve Ladder on "The Future?" — make of that question mark what you will.

Rounding out the set are a strong, though slightly hummed version of "It's About Time" and even Russell's own clapsong arrangement of Miles Davis's "So What", with Mike Walker joining the two main soloists for a well-deserved bow. A shaming amount of modern jazz history is worked through on this album. With Russell's catalogue in depressing disarray — I reckon only six or seven other things are currently available — it's an ideal place to start.

**PHILIP SAMARTZIS/GÜNTER
MÜLLER/VOICE CRACK**

WIRELESS

BY KEITH MCLEINE

Occasioning a 2002 summit meeting of Australian sound artist Philip Samartz and three elder statesmen of Swiss electronic Improvisation: Günter Müller, Andy Gohl and Norbert Möslang (the latter two fulfilling one of their last engagements as Voice Crack before disbanding), *Wireless Within* comprises an hour of needle-sharp interplay and high sonic drama.

The slightly contrived long tracks are notable for their tightly controlled build-ups of pressure, with each new intervention [be it a snatch of field recording from Samartini, a spike of blurred cyber feedback from Müller or a loud pop or rumble from Gull and Wölschlag's "cracked everyday electronic"] landing upon the musical tension. The first piece "Tombac Bothless" possesses a good deal more bite than its title suggests, despite operating on a deceptively bleak atmosphere of early morning birdsong. The pastoral ambience is progressively disrupted by shuddering machine growls and whir sounds like a swarm of robot wasps round an aerial cicada. "Beccus Mann" pits a backdrop of laptop fixt against abusive but abstracted screams of texture and fields of static that almost resolve themselves into a rhythm, before the track comes to an abruptly slamming halt with a screech of electronic brakes. The final piece "Beez Block" is more measured, with a crystalline feedback drone oscillating calmly as the Samartini drops in samples of French speaking kids at play. There's a delightful moment when, as the electronics sparkle the windpops in the sun, a little voice pipes up "Beez, I please!" But, true to form, this strongly contrasts with the sound of a bee, almost irresistibly drawing the listener from a moment of bliss, bringing the audience to a close.

Though by no means an easy listener, Wölschlag Within has a vividly atmospheric scope that could easily connect with a more mainstream audience. It's like a soundtrack to some spooky mystery involving various unspeakable, unidentified acts, leaving one with the distinct feeling that sometimes it's best not to ask too many questions.

The Compiler

Various artists: reviewed, rated, reviled

Radio on James Eck Roper

Essays On Radio: Can I Have Two Minutes

Of No Time? (Drona CD) is created by Porto based media artist Miguel Carreiras. Each of the 39 tracks, from contributions such as Fredland, Pta, Homer Borgjansson and Carreiras himself, clock in at the two minute mark, primarily so as to imitate as many artists as possible, it seems, rather than aesthetic concerns. These brief "essays" are spun from the thesis that radio, as the longest surviving electronic medium, is in danger of being taken for granted, un-marvelled at. Yet not only was radio mostly likely the first place where people were first exposed to white noise, it is an ideal instrument of the avant garde (as John Cage, on Imaginary Landscape #4 and Stockhausen on rhythm and angles, vociferated — the very twiddle of the dial is an indicator of both chance and sameness). Moreover, its every omission amounts to a "vast text" in both literal and, according to Maurice Blanchot, metaphorical space. Radio's output is something which should be studied of and engaged with.

Opener "Oliver" by Louisa functions as a signature take for this idea, its banks of sound looping the hubble clouds and talking on a life of their own. Others like James Eck Roper apply the robot precisely. He manipulates early recordings of old radio broadcasts in combination with turntables used as radio receivers to capture random broadcasts and frequencies. Elsewhere, contributions range from the musical to the musical, the skin-loving to the dispensable. But there are many highlights. Lawrence English spins a line of coo-like through what sounds like a dismal parlour room enlivened only by the chiming of a Grandfather clock — or, might as well react, doze, lounge or, you might assume. Stefan Marheis weaves an elaborate, silky swirling of pure, serene noise, while Primavera's "Ears That Hear" features belated fragments of moribund radio transmissions floating above the ether, occasionally twisted inside out by incoherent spatial glitches. Overall, this is electronics that benefits from having a contextual purpose. (DS)

There's a pointing by the surrealist René Magritte, "The Metence Assassin" (1926), which depicts a woman's corpse on a divan and several clandestine policemen waiting to apprehend the murderer, who is calmly listening to an old hand-cranked Victrola complete with horn as speaker. Obviously, even in a macabre situation such as this, time stands still for the man song of the 78 rpm disc, its easy to imagine that the assassin has been mesmerized by the chilling intensity of Gashe Wily's

"Slippy Jug Blues", the roaring screaming of Messiaen's "Mad Ques" The Disciple of Christ Today" or the metaphorical poetry of Mattie May Thomas's "Workhouse Blues" — all of which have been resurrected from the dusty archives of history for *American Primitive Vol II: The Pre War Recordings (1907-1939)* (Reviewers 2002). This stunning collection was curated by John Filley as part archaeological survey part science. The profundity and subtlety of these 50 rare performances transcend time and place with a surreal, dreamlike intensity, so much so that the unavoidable scratchy surface noise that tugs some of these ancient 78s is actually comforting, a buffer of safety between us and them.

Alternately offering moments of pure rawness (Gashe Wily sings, initially but, almost casually, "I'm gonna cut your throat baby, I'll look down in your face/Gonna let that handsome graveyard be your resting place") and sheer control (among others, the ghostly kazoo and remarkable voices on Walter Taylor's "Dead Rag"), these all-but-unknown folk artists provide a simultaneously frightening and joyous perspective on the vagaries of the human heart. Other examples range from seeps as worldly as a side pop commercial (the Nacogchee live's "I Got You for Cold Nacogchee") to those as otherworldly as The Solty Dog Four's "Balkin' The Jack", which sounds like a transmission from another planet. We encounter the famously blind guitar fingerpicking of Bayless Row, the theremin-like vocals of Tommy Stinson, the heroic operatic tenor of Homer Quarry Smith, and such unique, unforgettable artists as Elizabeth Johnson, Fugate Terry and Alfred Lewis. In every vocal turn and gasp and clamour, downhome banjo and eerie nasal harmony, there's a taste of the eccentric and the essential, a sound that makes time stand still. (A)

It would be hard to exaggerate the impact of twirling twiddle music on American radio music. They cut black and white — as very often black and white performers — on the same platform, and by definition they were highly mobile, influencing a huge demographic. The great James Rodgers, hailed as the father of Country Western or hillbilly music, started his career on the snake oil circuit, often performing with black "songster" Frank Stokes from Memphis, from whom he got much of his song collection. Rodgers is possibly a little grand to feature on *Good For What Ails You: Music of the Mockingbirds, 1926-1937* (Old Hat 2002), but his influence is evident. "We'll In The Jailhouse Now" was a hit for Rodgers in 1929 and it's covered here by The Memphis Skeke

(better known as Will Shades Memphis Jug Band), who turn it into a satire on elephant fraud and political huckstering.

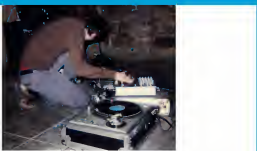
The medicine shows were usually about huckstering of a more direct sort. Musical acts were there to soothe up an audience for the sales pitch that would follow. Though some hokum songs are included on *Good For What Ails You*, most of them concentrate on the sordid side of life, presumably so that the quack or mountebank who followed could come on like a second line and promise relief with Doc McCall's *Benic Blood Purifier* or Wm H Green's *Indian Vegetable Pills*.

The best known of the acts just about make it over the threshold of cultural viability. Daddy Stovepipe lives long enough — born 1867, died 1913 — to be recognized as a minstrel performer. Mock-Wright's, heard here with singer/guitarist Charles Parker on "The Man Who Wrote Home Sweet Home Never Was A Married Man", exerted a huge influence on Earl Scruggs. Sam Jones (aka Stovepipe No. 1) was famous as an early version of Roland Kirk, playing bizarre homemade horns. Prince Albert Hunt was famous for being shot dead on his 30th birthday by the estranged husband of his girlfriend. And Pink Anderson's contribution to popular music, when posthumously hooked up with Floyd Council, doesn't need repeating. — Factor in assorted skiffle fusions, jug stomps, fruit jar drivers, rembers, cowboys, jar beats and tobacco jams, and you have a barbed history of vernacular music, therapeutic culture and politics second to none. Recommended; or, rather, prescribed. (BBB)

35 Mastered Seconds (Gran Ol Sound/Baskars CD) is the second in an ongoing series of remix projects, in which a single track is reworked by many different hands. The rule the remixers must follow is that no additional material may be introduced. The sole source at their disposal is Robert Lewis's "Cheerful Band", from 1900, his 1950 release on *Altogether Alternative*. The orchestrated feedback of Bond's 35 second composition, which here kicks off the proceedings, is then stretched and mutated into 11 new configurations. Richard Chartier slows the material down, reduces its volume and dynamics, and situates it at an allocatable point somewhere between the listener and infinity. Most music jumps out of the speakers and loudly proclaims its virtues, but Chartier's piece seems to hint at the proceedings rather than causing them outright, and the listener is gradually orbited into his soundworld. John Karamberg's "Dunhorns", one of the highlights

of *35 Mastered Seconds* — along with Ernt's "Sensae Cheery Sun", Staplewood's "Wet Dream", Ian Eppes' "Longfellow", Sawako's "RIR" and Blake Strickland's "Irreconcilable Differences (Restrictive Freedom)" — reshapes the source material to such a degree that it is obscured or lost. In their tracks, Kim Cascone and Rita retain some of the energy and edginess of Lewis's piece, whereas Alito creates the material and reduces it to a series of pulsations and drones. Ramee albums nowadays are so commonplace, and the results often so patently that the mere thought of them induces a yawn, but nothing disappoints on 35 Mastered Seconds and the programming of the tracks is unusually deft. (SMB)

"It's not opening up a packet of chewing gum," remarked Raimi, enlivened out maskmaking behind *Dimension Mix* (Come Measure CD), of the problems encountered in collecting together these recorded tributes to Dimension 5 Records, the label set up by educator Esther Nelson and electronic music pioneer Bruce Haack in the 1960s to help teach children how to dance and sing. His frustrations were caught on film by Philip Anagnostis in his 2004 documentary on the life and work of Bruce Haack. At the time, Haack was attempting to supply artists with digitally remastered tracks from the various Dimension 5 albums while negotiating with the songs' original publishers, who were so long in speaking to each other, from his trailer park here in California. His efforts, however, have been grandly rewarded: Bond brings a loopy, singalong delusion to "Furky Lil Song", while Stereolab's monstrous, fusing space rock version of "Mudra" is worth the purchase price alone. Imayuki Yatsuki compresses the whole Dimension 5 story into a few glorious minutes on Fantastic Plastic Machine's "Jim Bruce", while Tanya's zinging raves of "Popcorn" is all bounce and no calories. Elsewhere, Eels manage to bring a strange dignity to the massively silly "Jelly Dancers". Money Mark makes a playful fist of the creepily zoological "Spooks". Andree Lighta swoons in making "Walking Eagle" sound even more bewitching than the original, and if you thought it was impossible to bring a world weary party to a song called "Army Army In Your Pants", then you obviously haven't heard Irving's take on it. With part of the proceeds from the sale of this album going to Cure Autism Now and other autism-related charities, there's just no end to the joy to be found here. (RM) — Reviewed by Ken Hollings, Ian Laing, Brian Marley and Brian Marley and David Stubbs



SANHEDOLIN MANJO ICCHI WA MUKO

PSF CD
KEIJI HAINO
GLOBAL ANIENT
ATMOSPHERE

PSF CD
BY JOHN DALE

When interviewed by Ann Cummings in The Wire 257, Japanese musician Kei Haino discussed his approach to collaboration: "The one thing I say to the other group is that I hate playing in a jam session. I tell them to imagine that today I'm a new member of their group or that we're in a new unit for just one night." In his new trio Sanhedolin, Itsuwa Yoshida and Mitsuru Natsuno of Rutsu join Haino on drums and bass respectively. Haino has already played with Yoshida in the Knead line, and on their duo disc *Old Water Grapes*. Here, nevertheless, the key drive is the same: to transcend simple instrumentalist equations and attempt to create a new music sufficiently different from that of the players' main outlets and previous approaches.

Yoshida's playing, rooted in the Speed Ring of Rims, is as verbose and tricky as ever, ploughing through complex punctuation and spanning the kit as though he cannot bear a nano-second of silence. Haino occasionally pushes Yoshida into different zones, such as the quiet repose found in sections of track nine, but he just as often battles with Yoshida and Natsuno's peak tendencies, spilling acid sheets from his guitar, lost in a storm of noise and distortion. There are great moments throughout the disc, such as the third track, where flirried downtones on Haino's guitar meet with some of his most guttural vocals. *Manjo Ichi Wa Muko* may not be an entirely successful set, but it is worthwhile if only to hear Haino return to full volume rock form.

Haino's solo recordings are often his most unyielding. They also represent new avenues of exploration, such as his recent recordings dedicated to classical guitar and electronics. Though he has released solo percussion discs before, *Global Anient Atmosphere* is his first dedicated investigation of the drumkit, an instrument he tackled on Fushitsusha's Original's *Acoustic* after Itsuwa Takahashi visited the drummer's seat. Haino's approach to the instrument is as rigorous as you would expect, closely examining the sonancy of a lone snare drum, or pounding out complex sub-rhythms that feel like regular, quasi-loops. He may not utilize extended techniques, but his take on the instrument is so bloody-minded that the listener has no choice but to submit to his internal logic.

SMASH & TEENY FEATURING JOHN BUTCHER GATHERING

SPROOFIELD CD
BY KEITH MOUNIE

Toronto duo Smash & Teeny follow up their *Power* album of 2001 (recorded under the name Cimarron Sphere) with a double disc of "greatest hit," which includes a luminous half hour in the coiled company of master smashpot John Butcher. If Reductionism is maintaining a firm grip on improv practice right now, someone forgot to tell Sam Riebs. (Upon and occasional Japanese) self, and Alan Penn (guitar). Their duets on disc one of *Gathering* are dense and urgent, as if the pair

want to showcase as many of their effects and procedures at the same time. It takes a musician of Butcher's stature to put them gently on the shoulder and encourage them to ease off a little.

Penn is the polar opposite of the ultra-minimal Japanese guitarist Kei Sugeno. While his restless maximalism occasionally borders on the tedious, such as his incongruous quasi-metal soloing over Butcher's glowing loops atmospheres on "Laceration's River," which sounds like Bucklehead scrawling over Light's *Lucy's* *Antenna* — he is a genuinely powerful new voice on electric guitar. Though informed by Derek Bailey, Fred Fitt, Mike Coogier and Neil Gline, he is able to marshal and orchestrate these influences into focusing and affecting patterns. His work on "Like Storm Warning," on which he creates a shimmering movie of slide loops overlaid with out-kick strummed figures, is quite lovely.

Rebels, meanwhile, scowls thick, ambient computer backdrops that blur between the real and synthetic, the purling and the anoxic. It is her work on the kit that impresses most, however, as the high-end overtones dance and glint like rays of sunshine through sheets of cloud. The instrument's narrower frequency range opens up wider spaces than the occasionally over edged laptop atmospheres allow. Felling, the main Butcher collaboration "Hummingbird Midnight," though featuring fewer fireworks from the disc, is, by far the most satisfying piece of music on the disc. The saxophone's impossibly delicate soft notes seem to radiate from between the fluttering membranes of the alto, and his superb wail/breath play gently attacks the music's surfaces as if he's polishing a precious stone. Which, in some ways, he is.

SOFTLAND WAR AGAINST ERROR

SPFALM WATERLOO CD
BY MATTHEW INGRAM

Softland is Christof Steiermann, multimedia dealer and student of audio visual arts, and the second release of the Agente Error is his second release for the weekly project Swiss Speedmaterial project. With his generic minimal "glitch-art" sleeve graphics (a tasteful collage of pixelated print and elegantly stroked vectors) you know precisely the kind of charmingly lo-fi, fairly unimpressive sounds that are going to emanate from it.

Humble the first track "Please Confirm The War," with its offputting "Shyam with a sore throat" vocals, and you have 21 essentially lovely tracks stretched out before you. The reason "Materialism is required to see that 'Meter' (skippy bike patterns meet Babe Bonzo-style drums), 'Quasi' (Eino-reins), 'Midi' (gentle electronic-harmonized) and 'Widely' (langues post-Funk beats), while unassumingly excellent, don't exactly burn down the house, mess meaningfully with any templates or provoke much more than a tact approval. It's a wearisomely familiar case of underestimating, carefully cloistered electronics. The pretentious interludes, field recordings marked by their map reference numbers "46°50'N 14°25'E" and "46°32'N 8°21'E," though sonically appropriate, contribute to the general air of precocity.

But some more attractive elements deserve recognition — the sprightly World Of Echo-style double bass on "Muck" and "Lara" resembles

down through the fathoms of the music to quite powerful and pregnant effect. Touches like these push the record into the black, and it's only a shame there isn't more use of the instrument elsewhere on *War Against Error*.

SOME WATER AND SUN ALL MY FRIENDS HAVE TO GO

HERO CD
BY DAVID STRESS

A collaboration, between Chicago's John Hughes II, also Skiker and Shim Takashi of Spasova, who transported himself from his quest life in the Tokyo suburbs to the more hard-bitten Windy City. On arrival, his initial provocation: lying sleeping on a park bench. Although they barely spoke each other's languages, Hughes and Takashi achieved a sort of musical empathy, interlocking and embellishing on the endlessly driving album of warm pop, so funky it'll make you scratch yourself. Indeed, All My Friends Have To Go is the sort of "fun" pop album only made on the fringes — pop as low plastic play, like jet energetic sultry, taking the beats to pieces like most cool lugs.

But then, that's just one angle on this multi-angled work. You could also suggest that what's happening here is that John Hughes is presenting a new aging American proposition — sleek, sweetened synth-funk — which Takashi then takes, minimalist and fiddles with like a Rubric's cue, resulting in a subtly erroneous anagrams of the original — experience itself to innocence.

Or, it could be argued that All My Friends... with its sequent, nostalgic and particularly aquatic motifs ("I find a fantastic mood from people's backs") is a perfect blend of the organic and the synthetic. This is no better illustrated than on "The Rain," whose thunderclap effects were not achieved in the field but by lifting Hughes's daughter's boy tride with woodblocks and hockey pucks and rattling it.

Whatever, and despite the endless mis-hitting of the beats on "Sweetmaker" and the title track, or London with perfect little bits of rain, the album, from which much of this album is assembled, just out like shards of mirror all over the place, the album of glossy mishaps and friendly climate clashes works as effortlessly as raindrops down a window pane.

FREDY STUDDER & AMI YOSHIDA DUOS

POHJAN CD
BY CLIVE BELL

A couple of years ago I saw Ami Yoshida perform in London with poet John Berry and saxophonist Seymour Wright. Straight afterwards, an enthusiastic stippling from the audience asked Yoshida for her address: "We could do some stuff together," he gushed. Yoshida was nonplussed: "Why should that happen when I don't even know what you go? Good point, and the price of groing it is records like this one."

Yoshida is a Japanese vocalist who explores in microscopic detail the areas of sound that most singers strive to avoid. She's as extreme as Phil Minton, but in place of Minton's constantly shifting existence, Yoshida works with a chilled, steady persistence, and emotive results are achieved by a surgical intensity in which words like "anger" or "performance" take a battering. In

November 2004 she flew into Zurich for one day and recorded with Swiss percussionist Freddy Studer. Can they find a common language? I'm quoting the sleeve notes (here) between man and woman, accident and intent, 57 and 29 year old. Can they back.

"Duo 22" is ten minutes long. Yoshida sounds like the digestive system of a small fish in close-up. Studer is a Swiss musician on a Greek symbol, and batters up steadily through the piece. It doesn't work. For "Duo 23" Studer taps and scolds around his kit — one glance at his photo tells you his plays "Zan" — while Yoshida does the death wail of a baby laid in a desert. Studer brings a truckload of jargon to bear on the problem, but with such sounding pretentious. He's always moving swiftly on to the next thing, always he can really play, while Yoshida stubbornly generates a stream of vocal abrasions and try-ones, even sounds that need space around them. All used to Studer for appreciating Yoshida's unique talent, but this time it is the sound of him attempting and failing to find an equivalent vocabulary.

Could the answer be in the sleeve's small print? Freddy Studer plays GRECOH drums, RAISE cymbals/gongs and uses VIK RITH sticks... "Find yourself a bucket and a cheap microphone and start from there."

YUJI TAKAHASHI YUJI TAKAHASHI

CD
BY DAN WATKINSON

67 year old Yuji Takahashi is perhaps best known as a pianist of phenomenal virtuosity, but he has always been active as both composer, working with Yoko Ikematsu and Juji Wada in the Transonic group, and political activist, closely associated with Frederic Rawski, Christian Wolff and the late Cornelius Cardew. Not surprisingly, for someone who studied with Imma Xenakis, who wrote the near unplayable 1960s masterpieces *Huma* and *Eonta* specially for him, Takahashi's own music makes few concessions to pianism. When he plays, it was once said that he wrote for his hands: "The virtuosity which will emerge after human beings."

This new release of Takahashi's electronic music brings together six recent pieces, the first an electronics portrait of Gertrude Stein, the others "improvised performances" mixed with the syllables of Russian poems, transformed natural sounds and delay feedback, and three earlier works. Instrumental sounds are sampled and strung together in 1980s Koma Rensetsu 280790 to create a kind of cross between early 1950s concrete and traditional Japanese court music, with little of the *Shikoku* in the work, based on the words of the dark Kana, is a deeply complex and unashamedly dramatic exploration of the sampler. But the best is saved for last: *Time*, dating from 1963, is an outstanding work of vintage tape music, intended to depict the day-to-day routine of Takahashi's compatriots, a tense and masterly assemblage of otherwise ticking clocks that deserves to stand alongside early 60s classics by Luciano Berio (*Visage*), Les Femen (*Mikroorgano*) and Xenakis (*Idone*). Yet as stark as how closely Takahashi's 2004 work holds together in its technical precision, resemble his earlier music in terms of structural complexity, timbre and gesture. The work is certainly complex, though never mindy

The Boomerang

New reissues: rated on the rebound

Daydream believers: Sonic Youth

While Daydream Nation may be **Sonic Youth's** defining work, the arrival of *Go* (DGC 2+CD) two years later in 1990 still smacked of the epochal. Their shift to a major label on an innovative contract ceding total creative control to the group removed the taboo of such a move for other independently minded outfits, with little effect. The music itself had always had a certain ambiguity, which this deluxe release documents in detail.

If the group flirt with the pop mainstream, they do so with a Wertheimian sense of Pop, as witnessed by their explorations of celebrity psychodrama in "Lunic (Seng For Karen)" and "Mildred Pease" (about Karen Carpenter and Joan Crawford respectively). The trashy and throwaway "My Friend Goo" and "Mary Chest" are also Wertheimian somehow. Arguably *Go* is confused, with Ron Sexsmith (producer for the Wildflower series of loft jazz LPs—but also Foreigner) chosen to mix the album, the sound has a strange sheen, dulling the unmistakable solo glow of Lee Ranaldo and Thurston Moore's guitars.

The remastering for this edition helps, though a remix would have been the radical solution. As it is, you effectively get the best of the inclusion of all the album discs recorded to eight-track with Wharton Tiers. Frequently bootlegged and preferred by some of the group to the final cut, these form the bulk of the bonus tracks. They have a loopy earnesty. Only "Slow Job" (the deriso tale of "Mildred Pease"—damned is a real surprise) sounded, evidenced though on extra minutes of free-falling noise.

Compilation tracks and B-sides are collected, but sadly only three previously unreleased pieces surface here. There's all good: a classic Lee Ranaldo vocal, a short sketch called "Taxes," (which as Byron Coley explains in his estimable essay was named for the obvious Shalt influence), and "Tuff Boyz," featuring a wether of grunge guitar hero [35]

Michael Schneider's *America* (Nonesuch CD) is a strange slice of militantly bleak classic NOW (short for Neue Deutsche Welle or German New Wave) from 1981. On the devastating "Für Alles Auf der Welt" and "Geschichte Der Nacht," it's strongly reminiscent of the dipped sheet and real dramatic sound of Die's Kleinen (and Die Bosen, elsewhere it dunks a No-Wave audience. Atmosphere seems in its bazing this 'unheimlich' surreal scenes, winced in the pinky and perky vocal chorons of "Language Theater" (surely the strongest cut for these voices so far) and in the tragically contrite "Nathan Gert," an "Ruh Rausen" and "Hackerin."

Recorded originally for the cult Kankamuz

label, the true counterpart of the original Rough Trade imprint and home for Schuster's group Gestehefähr, this release of *America* is augmented by impossible to find tracks from Schuster's *Ritual* EP and the equally rare stunning NDW anthem "Im Namen Des Volkes" (7"). Possibly on acquired taste, the musical equivalent of Grappa, this is nevertheless a truly fascinating document of a scene that is being freshly rediscovered. (M)

In 1982, **Palais Schaumburg** released "Wir Bauen Eine Neue Stadt" as a single. With its muted, clipped bass, marinated for imaginary urban transformation and glowing with cold, funky sweet, it proved moderately popular and in keeping with the undercurrent of the times. However, on their first and faraway best album from which it was taken, 1981's *Palais Schaumburg* (Bizarre CD) the real reconstruction work is going on elsewhere.

Essentially the brainchild of Heiger Hilfer and Thomas Feilmann (who later affiliated himself with Basic Channel's Murtz Von Oswald and The Orb), Palais Schaumburg lapsed when Hilfer left to pursue a solo career but were at their greatest on this album, when they were off at tangents from each other. These songs are perfectly unmissed affairs, their proto-samples, loops, halting rhythms and Nietzschean-like calamities all beautifully at odds with each other. Tracks like "Morgen Wird Der Welt dazugehen" with its fuddled up cello riff and space machine synth, "Drives Weinklares," with its meered vocals and the hail of minor vocals of "Eine Geschichte" seem to be crying out for technology that hasn't been invented yet in order to give itself to themselves. (Though maybe it's best that it hadn't).

Much as The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari offered spurned suggestions as to a possible visual language of cinema sets, so does Palais Schaumburg rumble and effervesce with a hundred possible directions for 80s pop, only for it to play on in the cospic void of the CD. (3.5)

Pat Metheny fans were in for a shock when their guitar hero looked up with **Ornette Coleman** in 1985. Metheny's true, had listened at his interest in more extreme outbursts during his ECM albums 80/81 and Offspring, but nothing quite readies you for the visceral physicality and sonic violence of the Metheny/Coleman collaboration *Song X*, 20 years on and Metheny releases *Song X 20th Anniversary* (Nonesuch CD), a complete overview of the original album, with an extra track and a specially improved sound mix. Metheny often heralded that the *Song X* sessions produced

material equally as Molting as the tracks already issued, and it's revealing that these extra tracks stand proud at the beginning, rather than occupy a "previously unreleased" graveyard slot at the end of the album. "Police People" is the sort of joyous post-Kansas City blues that Coleman has always relished, and Metheny's glib guitar solo gives notice that the Lyle Mays part of his makeup has been left at the door—"The Good Life" and "Word From Bird" feature Coleman in deliciously creative mood, but it's a sad reminder that unward Ornette on CD is a rare event these days. By track seven we're into the *Song X* we already know. The thrashing "Endangered Species" is the most wild document we have of the harmonical labyrinth in action, while the subverted sentimentality of "Korkein Gay" is the type of definitive statement that R&B jazz just isn't disposed.

Ben Cherry's 1968 *Symphony For Impassioned* (Blue Note RSD Edition CD) was his second recording for Blue Note, sitting stylistically somewhere between Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* and Charles Sanders's *Libertarian Music*. Orchestral, Pharoah Sanders is pitched against Argentinian master of the gruff tenor saxophone, Gato Barbieri, while Henry Grimes is joined by Frenchman Jean-François Jenny-Clark on bass, Karl Berger (vibes/piano) and drummer Ed Blackwell complete the power ensemble.

Cherry calls the album "symphony" because the music is collected into two 20 minute suites, one per side of the original album. The music, too, has woven into its fabric a sense of metric unity, as Cherry's Spanish-influenced compositions material bridges the long solo passages. Pharoah Sanders's pecking piccolo hovering above interlarded lines from Cherry and Barbieri at the outset presents as dramatic an opening gambit as Blue Note ever released, and Ed Blackwell's long drum solo pushes the structure into bendy shapes that nodder back. Each symphony needs its slow movement, and the second suite opens with Cherry's plaintive cello. Tensions then build and the album burns itself out with an incendiary final ensemble passage. A vibrant album, packed with color, imagination and invention. (M)

The Munich nightbirds that hatched psychedelic krautrockers Arno Döllig also gave rise to **Bebeano**, an alliance of disparate musicians that once included Paulist. James Gang in its series, *And The Waters Opened ...* (Klartan CD), which first appeared on vinyl in 1973, features the core line-up of Peter Michael Horn on keyboards, double Robert Elsom, percussionist Coeh Black and guitarist Roberto C. Diéle. Between was a crossover

project, very much of its time and committed to spiritual quest in advance of the New Age.

Horn's background was the conservatory and modern composition; Elsom's predilections were medieval. Black came from rock and jazz and had accompanied Bob Dylan; Diéle had Latin roots. Guest musicians here add spacey electronics and Oriental baroque flute. Drones, droning and echoes of eggs beat the various strands into a smooth flow, a rather anodyne fusion with no adventurous grafting to add much needed grit. More Paul Winter Consort than than Ear Band. Three previously unreleased tracks from 1976 have been added to the release. (3.5)

Cast your eye down the personnel listing for Tony Riley's 1968 *Barfallo*, New York recording in C and you'll find **Jon Hassell** playing trumpet. He's there too in the credits for *Orion House* (1973) by Le Monte Young's Theatre Of Eternal Music. Then in 1980, Hassell joined with Brian Eno on their so-called *Fourth World* project record Hassell's profile, pre-empting appearances on record with Billie Holiday and David Sylvian. The characteristic sound of Hassell's breathy, sinuous mutant trumpet rapidly became fixed, a personalized totemism he carried into calculatedly exotic musical settings. *City Works* Of Ornette (Horn CD) was recorded in 1988 in the wake of *Flash Of The Spirit*, his scintillating encounter with Burkina Faso balafon ensemble fanfare. His joined city by guitarist Gregg Alexander, Jeff Rona on keyboards, percussionist Adam Rudolph and bassist Daniel Schwartz. The group play tight and edgy polyrhythmic funk, Hassell's sound has hardened and the production values are unyieldingly late 80s. Compared with the pastoral cool of Hassell's 1977 recording *Woven Equinox* (Lowly Music CD), City speaks of the progressive sciences of a musical destiny. (3.5)

Jeff Magnus's aversion to the mainstream, combined with a poor distribution deal and very run live performances, meant that **Neutral Milk Hotel's** remarkable second album, *In An Airplane Over The Sea* (Domino CD), never received the international attention it deserved. Originally released on Merge in 1996, why this rare as hen's teeth record hasn't been reassessed before now is baffling. Thankfully, Domino have stepped in to shake the dust off of Magnus' odd and beautiful masterpiece. His self-described "fuzz folk" will no doubt continue to stand the test of time, as *In An Airplane Over The Sea* is one of those rare, robust recordings that sounds just as innovative and magical as it did a decade ago. (MCI). Reviews by Mick Clark, Mike Clarke, Julian Cowley, Sam Davies, Matthew Ingram and David Stubbs



and lacking in definition. Nor is it ever cold and technical. The delicately treated percussion sounds and laptop sounds that form the backdrop to *30-Portrait*, which Takahashi describes misleadingly as dub, are as touching as elegant as his best.

TORU TAKEMITSU
A FLOCK DESCENDS INTO
PENTAGONAL GARDEN
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON CD

QUOTATION OF DREAM
ALPINE GRAMMOPHON CD
BY PHILIP CLARK

Toru Takemitsu's fusion of orientalism, Occidental harmonies and an awareness of Darmstadt modernism made an intriguing brew at one stage, although I wonder how well the music he wrote in the last decade of his life has fared. Quotation Of Dream for two pianos and orchestra (1991) is a stream of consciousness about musical passages locked around questions from, among other things, Debussy's *La Mer*. But the quoted material is literal and rather than manipulated creatively, and registers as a simplistically achieved comfort zone for the ears. Other works on the disc give further evidence that Takemitsu's art deviated into mannerism and decorum towards the end. Garden Rite, a survey of his austere early works, is more satisfying. The disc containing his powerfully expressive string piece *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonagonal Garden* (1977) is probably the best of his bunch. *A Flock* is widely considered as Takemitsu's breakthrough piece, and its doubling with the earlier *Quartet* for four solo instruments and orchestra suggests that the 1970s was Takemitsu's golden period.

31KNOTS
TALK LIKE BLOOD
POLYVORN CD
BY SAM DAVIES

31Knots are from Portland, Oregon, and have a few albums already behind them on the coasts. They're named Talk Like Blood after the Michigan Jay Police (Detroit, Essex Essex) engineers, and also fits in on drums to cover a recent departure, underpinning the guitar and vocals of *Joe Haggis* and the boss of *Jay Weinberger*. The group's sound shows some elements with Deerhoof: abrupt eruptions, some line signature ticks and a touch of the baroque in the arrangements. But these are all hallmarks of the math-rock mini-genre, which followed from the work of groups like Fugate and Skit, and they make for a fair comparison. It's not only the angular guitar stylings and why rhythm section (lead and King Crimson, met's suggest. Some of the fiddler, more are the most enjoyable, the lead lines on "A Wolf Emloys A Rat" for example. There's also an effort to widen the

soundfield through elements of sequencing and sampling, with mixed results. A cello loop on "Improvise Dispensing" sounds tagged on rather than integral.

TIMET/MARIOPOSA
MEIA-MORFOSI DI CANZONI
NAPOLETANE
D'ISCRIZIONE
VAPORI DEL CUORE/ALFREDO
ZIMMERLIN/GÜNTHER MÜLLER
ALPINE SONGS/REFRAINS +
POINT ZERO
ATRACT ART CD

Charles Ives, on the cusp of the 20th century called this kind of procedure "an old song deranged." But I doubt whether the clockwork repetitions and percussive bursts of "Carmello," on *Meia-Morfoosi Di Canzoni Napoletane*, were quite what he had in mind. Aspects of Neapolitan traditional song are discernible in these recordings and are treated with a degree of reverence (and the effusive respect that reverence often inspires), but at times the melodies get mistreated entirely and another, even more interesting music comes to the fore. *Marioposa* are an ensemble composed of electric guitar, keyboards, winds, reeds, vocals, violin and percussion, though each of the musicians plays at least one other instrument including harmonium, mink-neck and glodekspier. The instrumentation suggests that this is not music of a particularly adventurous bent, and the workings of the music by Lorenzo Brusci at Tinet Studio, Lucra, using only Marioposa's material and no additional samples, makes the music less even genre-bound than it already was. Brusci's looping and collaging are evidently just the first stage in an ongoing metamorphosis; fusions are invited to supply the source material from the database section of his website (www.tinet.net) and reveals it in turn.

Vapor Del Cuore was formed in 1993 by musicians who had hitherto been involved in experimental and contemporary classical music. The remit they gave themselves was a simple one: work without boundaries. In recent years they've become increasingly involved in improvisation, and joint projects have ensued with Nicolas Collins, John Oswald, Elliott Sharp and Osamu Toshiohara. 2000's *Alpine Songs*, which comprises the first half of this CD, involves a mixed quartet (flute, clarinet, violin and prepared piano, with douglings and sometimes triplings on electronics, CD players, voice, electric guitar, objects, etc), a sound engineer and a guest artist Alfred Zimmerlin on cello. Bookended by two snippets of song ("Ella Seta" and "Effetto Minchella"), the record plays for laughs, the "Alpine" genre and their refrains form a suite of lightly woven, often rather witty improvisations. Despite his great status, Zimmerlin is fully enmeshed into the ensemble. On *Point Zero*, from 2001, Günter Müller replaces Zimmerlin, and the ensemble are joined by two additional members playing piano and synthesizers. After the same-setting opening measures, Müller contributes a powerful "Cadenza," built in loops and layers from the inter-murmuring of minimalist selected sounds and electronics. Despite the ensemble having been expanded, often this is as less condensed and cluttered music than that of the Alpine.

Songs "Point Zero - Part I," which immediately follows the "Cadenza," builds to a noisy and ferocious climax, whereas passages into the clouds and low sound clusters which comprise "Point Zero - Part II." The third part is a brief, minimalist interlude, and the fourth and final part cuts repeatedly between a collapse phrase and a simple rock riff before expanding into chaotic, loudly intimated disaster. As far as I know, Müller hasn't done anything quite like this before, and it's interesting to hear how, and often how well, Vapor Del Cuore adapts to its unique way of working.

TRIO SOWARI
THREE DANCES
PORTALCH CD
BY CLIVE BELL

Now here's a model of European cooperation, a group that could supply a soundtrack for some major EU pressing of disaster. This Darmstadt team (London, Belgium, England, Switzerland, resident in Paris, and Düsseldorf, Berlin from Germany, recorded in a French studio and released on a French label. On second thoughts, Trio Sowari's vocabulary, the noise of faulty wiring and emotional evocation, may not appeal to nervy politicians reeking of isotopists. The organization of those sounds is intensely musical, a combo of painstaking patience and improvisational juggling, but the sounds themselves are hardly new musical.

The fairly whimsical of Berlin's music box of the sort of "Sowari" comes as quite a shock. Its percussion generally favours the gritty angular wip, while Cander jumps air through his tenor sax to produce any post-Jack Butler sound you like so long as it's not a note. Group leader Darmstadt electronics have a remarkable physicality that merges well with Cander's world of breath. On "Baiser" Cander goes old school with satyrish swooping noises, while we imagine knots twiddling and dolls floating. The concepts underlying this music may have been forged in the icy subterranean caves of Redaction, but they've generated plenty going on. The pace here, given, but you would never describe these three "dances" as meditative. Superficially it may sound like white coated folk running equipment tests at your local beach lab, but the important thing is that these concepts are firmly grasped. This is disciplined, focused music, the sound of people really thinking and playing, and close attention is consistently rewarded.

PATTY WATERS
HAPPINESS IS A THING CALLED JOE
DRK WORKS CD
BY DAVID KEDDAN

Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe marks vocalist and free improviser Patty Waters's first new recording since her return to live work in 2002. It's a document of a live set recorded in San Francisco with bassist Seward McCann and pianist Leonard Thompson in 2002, and besides a reading of her own "Moon, Don't Come Up Tonight," drawn from her 1986 ESP-Disk album, *Sings*, it's made up entirely of statements along the lines of "I'm not like that," "Lawrence", "Facilitating Rhythm" and "St Louis Blues". Waters herself bids as a tribute to Billie Holiday and her music, given the historical weight of the

material and the limited palette of her accompanists. There's little opportunity for Waters to navigate the further reaches of the music in the way she did on massively displaced early recordings like her version of "Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair". Instead we get some fairly faintly, pleasantly atmospheric readings of some of Waters' favourite songs.

Her voice is beautiful and husky, but it once was but there's still tons of spirit to her readings, and that beautiful shape whisper noises instantly identifiable. But as with her previous album, 1999's *Love Songs*, the biggest snag lies with her backing musicians. The pianist is particularly wretched, mugging cocktail shakers and daintily poked into one every breath. Left with little space to roam, Waters comes across merely as an accomplished jazz singer. And she is so much more, as anyone who witnessed her set at Le Weekend in 2003 with Barton Geene and Tiger Vigil will tell you. Although Waters seems to have lost confidence in her own, a delicately spooned piano playing, she was always her own best accompanist. We can only hope that she will return to the instrument at some point. This is an ineffective stop gap but more committed Waters ensembles will be disappointed at the lack of real meat. Maybe next time?

ZEROPING (WITH GUEST ARTIST BJ COLE)
MASTERS OF WAR
INDUSTRIAL MEDIA CD

By Nick Southgate
Born of disgust with big business, big media, big government and big guns, Masters Of War is a member not only of Bob Dylan's iconic 1963 protest song, but the protest song itself. The songs do more than shed protest in the minds of their listeners, however. Distributed under a Creative Commons license, they are intended to be copied, downloaded, uploaded, remixed and re-sampled for any non-commercial purpose, and were already widely available on the Internet before this CD release. ZeroPing began together with the late, great, and brave, who he landed in London via New York and Berlin. His partner in protest is Taped based sonic experimental Chun Lee, aka Sonovorable. As well as making the anti-war protest, they also deal with Cold War paranoia and assassination fantasies. "Assassination Portraits" puts its drum machine beats up against guest BJ Cole's steel guitar. Meanwhile Knard starts "Happy Birthday Mr President", warning to turn Marilyn Monroe's tribute to President Kennedy into something far more deadly for the 49th anniversary. "Masters Of War" itself is a new and powerful work with a fierce swing beat and heavy bass drums that to power it along, linking to a maledictive middle passage for Knard to pledge to the masters of war that he wants them dead and will follow their cadavers to a grave he would happily dig for them.
As well as the project's five original recordings, there are four remakes. Sonovorable contributes "Masters Of War" into a frenzied pop synth-bass piece, which at times has the menace of electroclash blazes and at others is a cartoonish squall. Cander Lowen rovers "Assassination Portraits" into a noisy, with a fierce swing beat, a snippet from the news coverage of Kennedy's shooting in an insurgent act of disgust against their leaders. □

Avant Rock

Reviewed by David Keenan

CABA KILLER & KAPAJKOS DAS MANDOLINENORCHESTER MCHWIS CD

There must be a million of yacks to be had around the Moskva after the day Berlin motorpops/digital hardcore Das Caba Killer unveiled their plan to rescue a chunk of their back catalogue for an orchestra of mandolins. But the results are actually less like the traffic-cone-on-the-leader than you might expect and closer to the kind of park anguished of UK groups like The Headcase and the long departed Dog Face Hermans. They have a rough, hand-hewn feel that's supremely tactile. Minus the digital spit of their samples, Caba Killer's songs sound more like teen tantrums, threats and come-ons, and a few of these tracks ("LA Shaker," "Down On A Shaker," "wouldn't even sound that out of place on a particularly bad volume of Girls In The Garage. Others, especially "High As The Pine," are just straightforwardly gorgeous. Kapajkos focus more on the pensive, rhythmic aspect of the mandolin, with repeated, clipped figures gradually acquiring hypnotic intent, only for vocalists Gina V D'Ono and Anika Line Trout to punt them down with some heavily trodden musings. The whole cast is more listenable and the cover sports the usual curvy.

SIMON FINN MAGIC MOMENTS DURTIO JUVAN CD

Simon Finn's recent return to live work and recording a mere three and a half decades after the release of his sole album, *Pass The Distance*, has been one of the most remarkable comebacks of recent times, with his creative powers seemingly undimmed by the intervening years. *Magic Moments* is the final collection of all new material to emerge since then and it'll be great for anyone who has experienced his wilfully hypnotic live shows. It gathers a clutch of recent performance favourites (three of which — "Willie Tapper," "East" and "Wanted One" — previously appeared on last year's *Silent City Creep EP*) alongside a reworking of one track, "Golden Golden," that dates back to the time of his first LP. The sound is live, intimately executed and extremely intimate, with Finn on acoustic guitar and vocal, accompanied on a few tracks by Jackie Wood, of Sun Dial and Current 93, on keys, reverbier and violin. Finn's swaddling influence still sounds like Leonard Cohen, and that same kind of cigarette haze apocalypticism defines the atmosphere of much of *Magic Moments*. His lyrics are bleak, scabrous and funny, and the combination of wistful, acoustic guitar and revealing personal egress gives it the feel of *Rolling Thunder/Desire* or Bob Dylan.

THE JULIE MITTENS RECORDED LIVE 5 MARCH 2003 NO LABEL CD

Live power the improvisations from a group of Montreal European thinkers piloted by guitarist Art Jan Schakabos, bassist Michel Van Dam

and drummer Leo Fabsek. The two were originally brought together by a mutual appreciation of the polyrhythmic higher key staples of the John Coltrane orchestra since *Obscured Concepts* and that works as a fairly accurate benchmark for the degree of energy/sound exchange going on here. Something in the way Schakabos waxes explosive single note drags from an overdriven guitar angle to mind the kind of post-rock psychotronics of Casper Brötzmann, while the degree of fuzz and distortion almost matches Nono Asahi's *Musica Rossica* in terms of wall-smashing ferocity. But the music is less about texture and grit and more about live three-way exchange, and the level of interplay is totally astonishing, matching the kind of speed of thought agility more commonly associated with free jazz with all the meat of the best rock.

JONATHAN KANE FEBRUARY TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS CD

Kane was the powerhouse drummer behind *Speed Bunder/Speed Thru* on *Swans*, and since then he's held down the drum seat for a power/blues mammoth like Ihsa Chatham and LA Monte through *Forever Bad Blues Band* (which has the endless songs of *Forever Bad Blues Band* a few kitches closer to the source with a clutch of lengthy blues instrumental tracks that work seemingly fused mechanical rhythms and non-linear structures into hypnotic grooves in a massively subtle psychedelic system. Here, even the slightest flux in rhythmic/melodic detail seems almost tectonic. Besides Kane's own formulations, there's a version of the traditional spiritual "Motherless Child" that reaches Wild Gals Och Shown in terms of pleading, flattened rock, and a festive reimagining of Fats Domino's spiritual "Guns 'n' Thru".

OMIT TRACER HELEN SCARSDALE 2XCD

Been a while since we heard so much as a beep from New Zealand's Omit aka hermetic bedroom sounder Clinton Kline, but this massive double CD set more than fills the gaps. Originally released on CD-R by SySeoul, Tracer has been fully upgraded by Helen Scarsdale with a swirling lo-fi synth/soundscape/processed stream. The first remotes deeply homed, with analogue synths, primitive drum machines, hi-jacked electronics, tape loops and a bonfire of effects combined in sad assemblages that cross moments of documentary-style field recordings with beautiful processionalists that recall the more ambient works of Armin Tjebkema and Klaus Schulze. Other parts are a little more schlocky (the music for a 1960s Buick 35-4i sedan, but even here there's something supremely melancholy about the lonesome play of analogue codes around little signs of synthesized melody. Indeed, this one might even top Copus Hermetically Quad triple CD set as the best Omit release to date.

THE USAISAMONSTER WOHAW LSD CD

The USAISAMONSTER play psychic, high energy acid rock à la Lou Reed's *Reverend & the Midgets*. It's all executed with the kind of dynamics, "on the dime" flash of the classic of *Lead* players and enough nauti vibes to leave them sounding as hick as hell like The Byrthes before them. The USAISAMONSTER obviously have the same reverence for Black Sabbath as awakes of brain-typing mid whump, and a whole bunch of cultic Metal moves here are obviously derived from Tony Iommi's vision of pure magic circa *Masoch of Noisy*, along with a quirky take on anthemic wiggly ballads that's somewhere between MC 80's worst garage monologues, John 5's *Hot* Ring Mistle gods and the incredible string Bane's convulsive hymns to miniatures. Parts of this might be a little too readily given and quite heavy for the average fan of sound-to-text, but for us dummies it sits just fine.

WHITE/LIGHT RELIX CD

White/Light is the Velvet-flavored duo of Matt Clark and Arroyo Lemos, who both have roots in the contemporary underground. Clark played in Chicago's *John O'Keeffe*, while Lemos has associations with Son's *Witch* and Jim O'Rourke through his soundtrack work. Together the pair work huge cylinders of melodic drone into repeat cycles as excitedly wired as "Keweenaw" — as Faust, only to stackle them to great monolithic riffs borne of the classic *Melvin/Earth* tradition, "28-43" is the album's centerpiece, with some cast in his bleeding red and shawnee fluted in a way that best approximates the feel of *Worm* (the words are poorly). The closing track, "04:45", is a split for the candylens and candleman feel of Sonic Boon's tracks on *Spacemen 3's* *Playing With Fire* album.

LOYD WYATT UNTITLED

Feed & Seed 3" CD-R
Feed & Seed is a great new CD-R label based in the northeast of America and run by Daniel Praelert, a member of Astral Blacking, who also features *Paul Labrecque* of *Sunburned Hand Of The Man* and who opened the second day of the new January *Bottomless Free Folk Fest* last week in May 2003. Lloyd Wyatt is Praelert's performance pseudonym and *Untitled* is a beautiful, sparsely populated dense piece scored for *Keccon* songs, *Hemorrhagic guitar*, *fuzzface* and *space echo* recorded "on the last night of red leaves" in Asheville, North Carolina. It's a gorgeous piece of music, one that carries slow burning afterimages into the air in the manner of *Winters* later, more instrumentally dense work, or the early *Seasons* driven organ recordings. Either way, this is the kind of dense work that is firmly anchored in a whop of identifiable sounds and that implies so many

phantom melodies that every time you listen to it, it seems to have subtly altered its appearance.

EZ YAZIJIAN SIX WAYS TO AVOID THE EVIL EYE CD RECORDING CD CD-R

Violinist and steel guitarist Ed Yarpian aka Dr Eweeet Yijian has played the Lee Underwood to David Fols's Tim Buckley for the past few decades with barely a thought to the contours of his own musical soul — so much so that my jaw nearly hit the desk when I unwrapped this, his first ever solo album, released on his newly minted *Ever Recording Company*. For anyone expecting a series of solo violin and guitar readings, *Six Ways To Avoid The Evil Eye* will come as a real curveball, as the central orbit around which most of these tracks swing is mostly based in rhythmic/percussive ritual in a way that more immediately brings to mind much of the Angus MacLise back catalogue. There's a heavy deontological air to much of the activity that speaks of personal trance as eloquently as the works of Alice Coltrane, albeit tempered to a much more park-punk-punkier palette of hand drums, bowed and traditional acoustic drums. A track like "Karmap (Ray Nine)" would fit beautifully into one of the more nocturnal volumes of *Live Sun City Girls* *Carnal Folklore* *Resurrection* series, its combination of bells, metal percussion and fiery vocals enough to illuminate the darkest night of the soul, while "George Sky Black Cloud" is a psychedelic deontological as firmly grounded in the tradition of music sculpted by the hands of humans as anything from Sandy Ball or Miv & EE's *Medicine Show*.

YURA YURA TEIKOKU NAMA SHIBIRE.NA.MA.ME.MA.I MEKHEIY CD

Most western ears will be familiar with Tokyo pop/punk like Yura Yura Teikoku from their appearance on PSP's *Yoko's Feedback* series, but back home their guys have somehow reached almost stadium-scale levels of teen adoration, with back room support from producer Yu Ishihara of *White Heaven* and Stars, and occasional guest spots from White Heaven, Stars, Ghost and Damon & Naom's guitarist Michio Nishida. Indeed, Nishida himself describes them as "the greatest band in the world". The staggeringly titled *Nama.Shi.Bi.Ra.Na.Ma.Me.Ma.I* is in fact a 2003 live album repackaged for non-dominant consumption by the US Mesh-Kay label. It makes a fine introduction to the group that touches on a host of operating bases, from brain-erasing, wall-damaged rock through power pop à la Raspberries/Big Star and dark Velvet-inflected rock in the mode of shady Japanese legends like the Jicks. There's something about the fidelity of this live set that particularly electrifies in a way that gives it the edge over previous albums like *Arts & Crafts* and makes for one of their most consistently impressive outings to date. □

Stamps: "Blue"
1944-1945

Dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

THE BUG FEATURING WARRIOR QUEEN DEM A BOMB WE LADDED IT

Out on the perimeters of reggae there's most extreme strains that might once have been related to hardcore dancehall riddims, but which now pulse at such a velocity that all comparisons are void. The primary source of these mutations was Kevin Martin aka The Bug who, despite his savage moniker, still always manages to trace his links back to the reggae root. His new label is launched as a collaboration vehicle for female MCs and singers, and debuts Warrior Queen and a fevered meditation on London after the July bombs. Her opening, instantly from space (in... some crazy muthafuckas out deh) "caters Junior Marrow's...apple out deh" (apple meaning slippery or cloyed from "Police And Thieves," which sounds almost pastoral compared with this bust, raising like a bitter wind through the streets of the capital. This is true reggae's production style — Kevin sent Warrior Queen the beats, she rapped the instant reply and now the tune is on the street.

BURNING BABYLON STEREO MASH UP

Stereo Mash Up is the fifth release by Slide Anderson aka Burning Babylon and a follow up to last year's *Knives In The Trenches*. Since the last album, Anderson has carried on the studio experimentation in the certain knowledge that hard work will take him wherever he wants to go. Although at times the sound may be a little murensian, as is the case with all early stage one-man operations, this is a collection of conscious variation and experimentation ranging from the sweet and light "Pressure Tension" — which sounds like two-time classics retooled in a friendly, laid-back style — through to Rude/Clash-style pirate-driven Katchab riddims like "Zionista Version", to tougher dancehall and daisy-dubby excursions sourced with a better class of vocal sample.

DOB GABRIEL BASS JIHAD AZHA CD

If 2003's *Ascend* was bass heavy, then this time around Dub Gabriel gives every other element up in the mix to create a massively dense sound that hews between the impossible. Matsukawa and the later work of the implacable Mullingmugge. After "War In The Poppy Fields," with And Nazanadina shopping out on saw over martial percussion and an obligatory Gnewa-style flute loop, it starts getting serious. "Zionism" is a big pan-Arabian street parade with elephantine percussion and clashing outside symbols — a slow, delirious lurch towards the rest of the album's feast.

Dub Gabriel's concerns are more cultural than the generatively highly defined potlucks focus of some militant Ryn, hence the dedication to the major Sufi poet of divine love, Jalaluddin Rumi, on the album's most lyrical and meditative cut, "Rumi Go Through Me" But

the maroush short organ drone that opens and threads through the densely textured "Garden in the Light in the Shade Of Gray" seems the greatest ripper on the set, while triggering a truly impossible longing to hear Rhy Riley in Dub.

THE HEPTONES NIGHT FOOD OUTTAKES & BLACK ARK SESSIONS AUMULUX CD/DVD

Having moved on from their golden period at Studio One with Clement Dodd, The Heptones were picked up by Island in the reggae feeding frenzy of the mid-70s. Over 1976 and 1977, they cut Night Food with Harry and then Perry Tyme with Lee Perry. The first was a clear, commercial attempt at a "back to the root" song set with a mix of riles of earlier hits and killer new tunes; Scooby's production engine at Black Ark was at full steam so the follow-up was a much more steaming affair awash in the producer's signature warm, viscous sound. Outtakes from the Perry sessions have already surfaced on sets such as *Anthology*, but appearing for the first time now is a bunch of generally unrefined master from reggae's most influential vocal harmony group.

Although they come without the sugary overdubs that plagued the original album, the late appearance of these tapes shows that their exodus from the final track was justified. They are clearly inferior to those that made it, though there are funky duos from The Wailers Band, especially "Hell And Dub", the version to the socially conscious observation "Living Up A Hill". The four alternative extended cuts of contemporary Perry tracks are a real bonus. Both "Mystery Babylon" and "Sorrow" feature mystery DJ Raining King and threaten an entire discotomy of "Fragrant King". So what threatens to be merely an interesting release for reggae archivists becomes a must for Perry fans.

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER ALL PLAYED OUT ROUND TRIP MARS CD

Just as it looked like New Zealand had a surfeit of slack, soul-stylin' reggae groups, the return of the International Observer aka Ben Bailey and Mason operator Rauli Karantans weighs the balance towards taut dubwise sounds. Bailey went a long way to bury his old vinyl (pajamas and herring) red painted in the musicians, but he should face up to the fact that he will always be a recovering Thompson Twin. But there's no shame in producing such a well crafted album — the follow up to 2000's *Seen on Strim*. Jim's Round Trip Mars label — that outperforms many top drawer UK roots acts.

The slow sliding intro to the opener "Leaf Mold", complete with sacu ceco, has multiple life starts before settling the slow but hard steps pace that runs through this impressive set. "Fragrant Place Mat" was written especially for an Auckland show that was cancelled due to winter weather, while "Seedmaker's Dub" was recorded for an anti-GM event in Auckland. "London Dub", meanwhile, was written in a fit of

uncontrollable, but obviously misplaced nostalgia for the London Underground's Northern Line.

AUGUSTUS PABLO AUGUSTUS PABLO AT KING TUBBYS ATTACK CD

Pablo is represented as both interpreter and innovator on this "Barry Striker" Lee produced set compiled from singles, album tracks and dub version flips where Lee was in control — hence the direct relationship with the early Thriller set in the shape of "No Resting Pablo", "Rough Pablo" and "Every Dub I Own" — an outburst to the Brand pop hit "Everything I Own", made popular in Jamaica via Ken Boothe's sweet version. There are covers too of Moe Dean's evergreen "Barbados (In His Underpants)", the Wailers' "Put On", Burning Spear's "Toggy Road" and the Impressions' "Queen Of The Minstrel".

But it's on two versions of popular song that Pablo excels as interpreter, an act for which he is rarely credited. His take on "My Desire", the flip of John Holt's tribute to R&B superwoman Jesse Belvin, manages to hit one of those melodic spots that miss the mark on the back of your sock. As for his version of Earl Sweatshirt's "A House Is Not A Home", it's clear that for "Tubby the dog was not a job more a labour of love. He envisions the rhythm through a mix that's threaded by Pablo in a true jazz improv style.

MAX ROMEO CRAZY WORLD OF DUB JAMAICAN RECORDINGS CD/EP

Another apparent sack punch from Jamaican Recordings that turns out dead. Perhaps the only thing "crazy" about the album is the fact that the concept reached production. Max Romeo's best perhaps best known for his accidental "rude" hit "Wet Dream", but more credibly for his work with Ninoy and then Scratch, culminating in the roots classic "War In The Babylon". Like many other talented Jamaican singers, though, he took paying gigs where he could. This pleasantly understated, sunny Lee produced album consists of a few one-way rhythms and a bunch of covers, including Ken Boothe's "Writables", Little Roy's "Waila Wail", Peter Tosh's "Stopper" and "Laguna", and "Laguna II", John Holt's "This Clock" and The Wailers' "Keep On Moving".

PRESSURE FEATURING WARRIOR QUEEN MONEY HONEY HYPERDUB 12"

Koddy & Daddi G reserve the Hyperdub 10" vinyl imprint series for their own work, while the 12" format is for guests. The first outing came from the mysterious Bursi with the genre-busting South London Boroughs EP describing grim cityscapes in heavier sound language. The equally anonymous Pressures joins with ex-dreadnott Warrior Queen to focus on the frustrations of a woman's role in the more domestic daily agenda, concentrating on the

nuance of getting by in a city that looks open with what sounds like a retooled soundtrack from Roger Contant's *Premature Death*, with mournful sighs and gasping inhales before the beats come down, developing into a frantic rhythm bed consisting of a series of collapsing and shifting blocks. The extended mix stretches the beats into lighter, shimmering waves with the Queen getting the dubbed-up treatment after a more comfortable rap. Deepening the chat will need further research.

U ROY & KING TUBBY U ROY MEETS KING TUBBY ATTACK CD

U Roy may not have been the most militant or lyrically creative DJ, but boy he could really swing. This excellent sampler though he releases out for Sunny Lee in the late 70s — a period that initially might be seen as journeyman output — could justifiably be seen as his finest hour, alongside the last Channel One Night Time sessions. And let's not forget that Daddy High Roy was also there to partner Tubby as his lead MC on the *Mountain Hit* sound, as Tubbs dubbed down the zinc fences that bounded the dance with waves of dub and reverie, while the DJ coasted first echelons with freestyle jays. The story here, as yet another Sunny Lee reconfiguration, has U Roy scattering over Burt Campbell's "The Gorgon" and "I Shall Not Remove", Johnny Clarke's "Every Knee Shall Bow", "Citation Rebel" and "Rock With Me", with dubwise version taken from the master excursions from King Tubby.

VARIOUS DUB RARITIES BOX SET TIDIGRAM BOX

Today, the War-Mat of reggae labels, stacks 'em up and ships 'em out in such a rapid fashion that one could be forgiven for ignoring the Box Set series — cheap, mildly packaged, usually containing lists of filler and not much in the way of killer. This one might look cheap and saaty at a tennor a shot, but the killer more than makes up for the filler. This is a fairly random set of 50 mostly 70s dubs authored by Lee Perry, Ninoy, Bunny Zukie, his brother Blackbeard, Pablo, Tappa Lee and Linnell Thompson.

The compilers claim that most of these tracks are now to CD, though it's not waste our time asking that one who we have those classics like The Observers' "Headline", the version to "Sis Dread Ninoyee Goto To Jell", the Big Youth DJ cut on Dennis Brown's interpretation of "My Time" and "Boiling Water", an unmissable wah-wah guitar dub to the same singer's "Westbound Town". The remarkable "Iron Fist" from 1979 creates a template for the digital revolution that was to follow five years later.

There are several Perry scorches, including "Dub In Time" (still looking for the vocal version to this tune, please) and the fabulous "Iron Wolf", with dubbed harmony drams and what sounds like a wah-wah organ running right through the mix. It's a bit to Sunny and Ricky's "Freedom Fighter", though I suspect recall the "I" episode being so wild. □

Electronica

Reviewed by Ken Hollings

CALIKA SMALL TALK KILLS ME AUSCULTA CD

It's easy to become lost in the minor profundities that constitute much of the tracks on Simon Kaeleha's debut release, and maybe that's no bad thing. A conversation made up of glancing details and passing asides can sometimes be a pleasant way to pass the time. Starting with sounds recorded on derelict pianos, harps, mouth organs and fragments of wordless song, Kaeleha's intricate manipulations tend to play around with the pace and fragmented rhythm of events rather than their dynamics, which means that the range of each piece rarely strays far beyond exchanges pertaining to recent changes in the weather, or the late running of the trains. But then the making of bold statements, even as the libel accrues of small talk, tends to be frowned upon during these dangerous times.

DAVID CHESWORTH FIFTY SYNTHESIZER GREATS WAMIC CD

DAVID CHESWORTH ENSEMBLE MUSIC TO LIVE THROUGH WAMIC CD

Despite boasting only 37 individual tracks, Australian composer David Chesworth's *Fifty Synthesizer Greats* redeems itself by featuring some of the best slowmovers ever. In them Chesworth describes working at a plastics factory in the late 1970s to earn enough money to buy an Akai 4000 DS mel-to-seq tape recorder, borrowing a Korg 700 monophonic synthesizer from a local group and knocking off this charming selection of pop jingles on his parents' living room table in the closing months of 1978. Fast forward to *Music To Live Through*, a new disc selection of compositions for electronics and acoustic ensemble, and we find a less tentative but for more accomplished man at work. A quiet intensity and a thoughtful concentration permeate each piece, resulting in some quite luminous moments. All the same, you can't help blissing out for the kid at the Korg sitting in his parents' lounge, trying to forget his day at the plastics factory.

JASPER LEYLAND CAPSIZ STRAW COW JAMMY CD

Jasper Leyland is the alias of Norwich-based producer Jonathan Bennett, whose pieces derive much of their charm from his meticulous laptop explorations of extended sonic periods. The title track on his debut release builds up a gentle forward motion through the faint, rattling repetition of a series of chimes; the faint sounds of distant brass and a sequence of tight rhythmic pulsations give the piece a lot of its character. The other three cuts on this EP show a similar precision and focus in their thoughtful development, so that even the false ending on closing track "Copper" works well for him.

MAGNETOPHONE THE MAN WHO ATE THE MAN AND CD

Four years on from their debut album, *I Guess I Need To Be Reminded Of How Much You Love Me*, John and Matt Phone have learned to put a cap on some of their twilit, more distracting high energy moments without losing any of the invention or drive. With a little help from assess Kim and Kelley Deal from the Breeders, and underground singer PG Six, Magnetophone's second album has a stunner feat to it, enhancing the intricate surface flash of the electronics. Melody lines have been reined in, beats are kept simpler, and the result is something far more coherent and complex than its predecessor. Their collaborations with King Creosote on "A Sad His His (Carded My Demise)" and "... And May Your Last Words Be A Cheese To Make Things Better", which also features a sublime vocal contribution from HMS Gnarles, are particularly tender highpoints. This has definitely been worth the wait.

MARCONI UNION DISTANCE ALL SAINTS CD

It's entirely possible that, when cinema ceases to maintain a separate existence as an art form, it will continue to survive as a type of music. Its influence upon notions of content, absence and treatment will continue to be felt long after the

bit torrent has swept film away, leaving only a set of downloadable audiovisual components in its wake. In other words, we may already inhabit a world where movie soundtracks increasingly outnumber actual movies. Indeed, the second release from reclusive Manchester duo Marconi Union, provides evidence that this process has taken on an elegant life of its own. Deftly structured and sensitively performed, each of the seven compositions is a burnished and reflective set of surfaces, beautifully blank and capable of capturing the attention. All we need now is a darkened room.

SON OF ROSE SON OF ROSE SQUADRON ENT CD

Although Seattle producer Karren Sander's parents first moved with him from Iran to America shortly after the country's Islamic Revolution, he still grew up in a home constantly filled with the sounds of Persian folk and pop music rather than the culturally berumming white noise of broadcast TV. The music he creates as Son Of Rose may owe more to "historically specific frequencies" than rhythms and melodies, there's a unique delicacy and peace to his compositions. More like digital *serifs* made up of floating groupings of microscopic events, all six tracks on this limited edition debut EP manage to establish precise boundaries and parameters, so that forms gently manifest themselves through the accumulated flow of minute activities.

STACS OF STAMINA TIVOLI WERNIKOS CO

What tips the outstanding workload from Swedish 8-Bay crew Stacs Of Stamina over from a crucial test producer to an electronics offering is the serious intent with which they tweak the SID chip melodies over heavily compressed beats coming on strong, like a Commodore 64 running a moviey version of *Last Days*, every track has the wild kinetic feel of an early videogame. The graphics are brighter than they are detailed, and the sound is a crosshatched mess, but it's still an unbeatable combination: Electro as sublime thumb candy.

The rhythms are subtle and complex, with killer contributions from guest MCs OneTwo, Mike Ladd and Francis TIC that go well with the fitting waveforms, affording background effects and relentless, accelerating pace.

SUPER NUMERI THE WELCOME TABLE NANA TUNE CD

Whether your first encounter with occult space rockers Super Numeri takes place in their native Liverpool or somewhere deep within the Horse Head Nebula, the concentrated energy with which they are busily constructing their own dimension will quickly impress itself upon you. Their hypnotic jangling guitars, rattling drum delays and serpentine collective compositions belong in a parallel universe where time and space continue to unfold in configurations that correspond directly to the time signatures on some unsupported early Can album. Check out the magnificent 24 minute apogee that is "The First League Of Angels" and believe that there really are better worlds out there than this one.

SIMON FISHER TURNER LANA LANA LATA NANA TUNE CD

With each new release, Simon Fisher Turner expounds himself even further down a data stream of his own devising that is both and and reasoning. Less of a composer these days than a sublimely gifted organizer of information, his projects no longer seem confined to just one approach or channel. His latest twin disc release is three different assemblages in one package. *Lana*, subtitled "Music Silence Noise", is a CD collection of beguiling featherweight musical collaborations with French sound artist Roxane Lenclos and Italian electronics duo Du Mi. *Lana*, also designated "Photographs Films", is a DVD selection of decomposed audiovisual studies cut together by Sebastian Sharplus. Finally, *Lata* is a compositional piece programmed by Paul Farnington, which allows the user to create "Rotations Colours Sounds" on a home computer. As usual, Turner's deep sensitivity and empathetic approach to his material are what pulls it together and gives it life. □



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CASTANETS

Hip-hop

Reviewed by Dave Tompkins

staubgold

MUSIC OUT OF PLACE



AZ AWOL KIDZ CUP

On a lyric website, someone heard *effervescence* on "Schweppes," so if the 17-year-old AZ was sipping tonic water and Alka-Seltzer on "Life's a Bitch" while Kuz's dad went whittled his trumpet and considered hiding the gin behind the Gap Band record. Cornholes later, Zoro Flomster is doing end zone dances and AZ gives us the album's first surprise, or at least an EP's worth. "AZ's Chilly" entices Brooklyn with the help of MOP's Fuzzy Street Schweppes! Womack and a bowling bowl dribbled on a bear stomach, better known as Eddie Kendricks' "My People... Hold On." Jay-Z tip toe whisper is stolen for "Bustling Stage" ("hello even politely stated") and the DJ Premier-produced "Come Up" is 94 with rusty ballies. (While we ran out of ways to describe Premier's strange five years ago, his unreleased mix of Baggie's "Madame Gun Funk" should be legally available by now.) "Envious" is a power struggle between Bouncy Killa's profundos and a piano that'll court your dentures for AZ's producer band. She says "muscle" like "my need" and for an all-up second, the News went crazy and accused AZ of using his effervescence to regenerate bales.

DE LA SOUL MY MINDSTATE NO LABEL: 12"

Remember The Jungle Brothers' *I Beaz Wit The Remedy?* "I am the elf to the seven closed chest down to the *Flintstone* legend in the black night watch/figure me zones to the outskirts," says Dove. "I had to sit down for a while because my style was too heavy to beat," says Pos. "Who you calling beat?" asks Benetton Mike. "Uhh," said the folks at Jimmy Boy "Hello!" says Father Williams, again and again, answered by darkness and silence. "I think I'll chop the baseline at the knees," rights as Price Paid. "And then fly all kinds of bugged out shit... when... Pos is talking about being shot at by Charlie Brown?" "I was recorded at time of Buellorne Mindstate, we think," says someone stuck under a seat on row zero in the clear mid-auditorium. "Was that George Clinton's teeth nothing like wet a dog before the suck my soul part?" asked the big Pankadellia fan. "I did not say 'I am the elf,'" says Dove. Yeah you did. Says who, twisted as a bedpan balloon squid.

EDAN FEATURING PERCEE P AND CUT CHEMIST TORTURE CHAMBER MIKE LEWIS 12"

The New York perk is buying a box of Goatsk March and bumping into the guy who did "Let The Hurricane Bump," a record worth bottling your kidneys for. Meanwhile, Edan Portney was finding a copy of "Let The Hurricane Bump" in Skippy White's Boston center, thinking, "This it would be like to hop on a truck with Pease R, the Rhyme Inspector, recently spotted blaring over a Chin Jap for Stone's Thers or just screaming his mindless headbutt with Lord Finrose in Jim O'Neil's SBA documentary, which

cannot be mentioned without waving hi to the ice cream balls. "Torture Chamber" has that beauty school A-did dropout snarl that made Edkin's album a cloud move this past winter, the Cut Chemist remix is a die with a fancy horn and guitar stab trying to show off its skill collection, one of which, according to Percee, is blown, sitting on a car horn. Then pasta gets punctured by artiles and someone, hopefully not me, goes on a legless bicycle ride, autopsy turny, while someone else, maybe Mr Humboldt Magus, is as high as ice cream balls.

ELLAY KHULE CALIFORNIA DEJON CO

On the new "Kryptonic" single by Atlanta's Purple Ribbon, Big Ben's cackles beat (a puno dancing to bullets) to its double time flow, a style Baron Thompkins, aka Ellay Khule, was shipping into shape more than 15 years ago in South Central Los Angeles. "Telecommunication" is Khule's masterpiece, a demo produced by Nobody (Elvin Etzels) in 1990. Nobody has been waiting just as long to make appearance from The Silver Apples' Lovefingers, here mixing its first into a distant. Meanwhile Khule catches the mellow canter sun, gives a black eye and turns victory circles around it. Dude practices these things while joggng through LA, having his quick draw while showing an utter disdain for the space bar and improving the air quality. As the members of the Chillin' Villain Empire and chief librarian of U.S. Good Life open mic history, Thompkins save Valarie 10-splatter his lyrics on the wall. For Joe boosed out of the building and Mike 9 went nuts on Cybotron's R-9. U.S. Good joins Nobody on the boards, finally rescuing Khule from cheap beat hell. Mental runaway Bushdier carries on "Dandygones," blowing smoke into scattered bits of space float, while "Sound Like..." features Ben's orange brother Permatoads Thompkins. The Apples said it best: "weaveg golden paths that run."

GHOSTFACE BE EASY DET JAN 12"

No kick drum is an island but Ghostface is swimming for it in his robe, mic between his teeth, blasting grandiose out of his nose. The gold wrist falcon start blankly August but Pete Rock says the Sphinx and a Michael Viner as type mm. (Imagine him over "Food's Pleasure," the next hollow bones). The home make way for the Kick Drum of Lost Souls and Starvationist talks about selling a crew of fake towns on eBay, making the snipers list he taunts, "Y'all can't Argument! We're not!" I'm pretty happy that the album is called Fish Scales.

K-OTIX GEORGE BUSH DON'T LIKE BLACK PEOPLE NO LABEL: 12"

An instant big-namehood roared sometime between Kanye and James Foko "Gold Digger" performance at the MTV Video Music Awards and Kanye's unsolicited blurt on a Kamas television,

which gave Houston's K-Ox their hook and site in remaking the Biggest song out into a song about one of the year's biggest tragedies. Bad call reception in the attic, waiting for choppers, sequestering to the corner store their few, more head-scratching doublet than anger, doesn't translate the sick feeling. "Niggas staving and dye" of trust/But he had to check those referees first." If only it replaced "Gold Digger" on the radio. Could it be heard in two weeks before as Houston Fed Hurricane Rita in traffic let's EP?

MISTAH FAB SUPER SIC WIT IT NO LABEL: 12"

It's been a while since a Bay Area rap song reminded me of a sleazy dog in my basement jeans. But then it was, sequestering across an archaic ice field, dodging bullets from a Norwegian helicopter, as it happened in John Carpenter's *The Thing*, just before Kurt Russell dodged boarder in his hand drive and things got apocalyptic and heads became spiders. How Mistah FAB closed Eminem Morrison's artist back rumour is one of those questions better deferred to giggled scientists in perkas. There is a PSK rattle but calicited and striped of its echo and accented by a lung-stealing theme. A cell phone is a "silly" and non is strangled as "am," similar to wrestler Ann Anderson. One of these guys, the one playing platoon on whiskey scots, sounds like Brok from Spanglish. Then FAB yells, "Scorper! Scorper! Purple! Purple!" Local as hell and one of my favorite beats this year — along with the imaginary drums only version of 3-M's Marlon's "Stay Fly".

VARIOUS NEGROCLASH MIX CD

The eleven artists clearly that Electro is electronic soul music, not "bad haircuts and gun glasses at night" an obvious point that wildly even now still needs to be made with a banana in a New York. Conducted by DJ Darna, Lindsey and Language, the Negroclash project introduced us to the re-edited of Patrick Adams' "Moogro Walk," its synth synched against a preboses, not appearing how but a glad ped to show up in person the third Thursday of the month. This was ranges from obscure to frequent B&B classics. Extra T's "Cone Fisks" (Lil' U2) is the only Vocoder canteen art man can by a member of Miami Sound Machine that says "Bass! Bass! makes you feel like a man." Meanwhile "Aurorabon" sounds like a man, so husky nobody believed it was the Primer Sisters. Alexander O'Malley and Cherelle's "Saturday Love" (which Miami's Speedhearer went nuts on) is that cab across the bridge makeout, a clear idea of why sick went cross-eyed for Cleveland's cute isp. Can't fight the "Freakalized" either. When Midnight Star played to capacity at the Ohio State Fair, Vincent Colvococonded, "Please report to the dissection" and kids said, "Okay" and tore down the fence. Colvococonded's cry say, used to do David Lee Roth wardrobe while wearing purple blockers and scoping lines from War Games. □

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Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

THE GEORGE BURT/RAYMOND MACDONALD QUINTET HOTEL GILLETTE TROY, CT

Scottish guitarist George Burt and saxophonist Raymond MacDonald form a quintet with double bassist George Lytle, drummer Allan Fordmigh, and Nicola MacDonald singing and playing melodica. On *Hotel Gillette* they are joined by regular guest Laila Caillat on soprano and by Sushi K. Dade from Future Pilot AKA playing bass and theremin. The group are pleasingly free from improvisation and there's a rock momentum and loose jamming favour to much of this studio set. Nicola MacDonald's laid-back and understated contribution, vocally and instrumentally, is a sure indication of what the group are all about — you can tell the musicians feel that there's not much that could be better than getting together and making their music, and it's a pleasure to listen along with them.

MICHEL DRESSER SOLO LAS PLANQUES SCARFAMUS GILDED CD

20 years on from his debut recording *Terra (Nero)*, French soprano saxophone artist Michel Dresser shows no inclination to abandon his love of musical eclecticism. For this, his fourth release on the Norwegian Solo label's limited edition Silken subsidiary his instrument is, as ever, his main, stripped back to its inherent identity, blown like an artificial conch with breath sounds amplified, and merging into laminated multitracks and ambient whistles. The *Chapelle De Las Planques* in Tignes, southern France, was the venue for this recording in July 2004. The contemplative nature of the place is reflected in the music, which, although uncompromising, is crafted with great care, patience and sustained meditative concentration.

MARK DRESSER/ DENMAN MARONEY TIME CHANGES CRIPPLED BOWLING CHINE CD

MARK DRESSER UNVEIL CLEAN FEED CD

Time Changes finds technically superb double bassist Mark Dresser embedded in a suave jazz outfit with Denman Maroney's tenorophone, Michael Sarafa's drums and singer Alessandra Merisano. Much of the programme is an elegant distillation of collective juggling in terms of tempo and rhythm, discreet struts and detours, executed with apparent ease. Occasionally that tight control yields to incursions of more eccentric improvising — less chaste technically — making play with textural contrast and other less measurable elements that add to the music's spectrum of interest.

The full breadth of Dresser's artistry is presented on *Unveil*, a solo double bass record that grips the attention from start to finish.

Merisano makes a case for a collaboration with the engineering skills of producer Lee Messner, who manages to capture and mix the voluminous sounding of the bass body with

details registered through pickups built into the instrument to maximise its high frequencies. A graphic showcase for the adapted bass and for Dresser's exceptional virtuosity, *Unveil* is far more than a staged demonstration. It's their epic scope to the music's imaginative breadth and to the creative energy that sweeps through it.

BARRY GUY NEW CORT-ENTRO OORTESTROPY INTACT CD

The London Jazz Composers Orchestra was Barry Guy's earlier vehicle to realise his challenging compositions for a large group of improvising musicians. *Oortestropy* is a probably worthy sequel — Guy directing and playing double bass with nine top flight collaborators. Cort-Entropo is a three-part work, conceptually sophisticated, structurally astute, performed with commitment and sensitivity. The line-up includes old allies — saxophonist Evan Parker and percussionist Paul Lytton — and less familiar figures such as pianist Agustí Fernández and Patrice Hollander on tuba. Ensemble swells and rapid firing disintegrate into knotty, contrasting solos, some images of cohesion contrasting with centrifugal action. Expressive spontaneity is a natural nature for instrumentalists such as saxophonist Mats Gustafsson and trombonist Johannes Bauer. A major strength of Guy's writing for these players is that it steers them into emotional registers and mood frames they might otherwise shun, thus expanding their expressiveness.

PAAL NILSSEN-LOVE TOWNORCHESTRALHOUSE CLIMAX CD

LARS-GÖRAN ULANDER TRIO LIVE AT GLENN MILLER CAFE MYR CD

"Love", which opens *Townorchestrahouse*, bursts into the air fully fledged with Nilsen-Lo's restless percussive bounce and ingeborg Håten's spacious, thrumming bass providing a rhythmic trampoline beneath Evan Parker's tenor and Sten Sandell's piano. Parker sounds wonderfully gauged and pugnacious, Sandell precise and irreproachable. Alignments within the quartet shift as the first half hour passes, the initial urgency ebbs and flows but the music's animated tension remains constant. If, like this, too, throughout the second 30 minutes with Parker graciously soaking and swooping on someone to begin with, and Sandell extracting mental hardness and glister from the keyboard. A brief preface concludes with a touch of swagger. The collective vigour that pulses through this fully played and posed set is exhilarating.

Nilsen-Lo and bassist Palle Danielsson form the rhythm section for Lars-Göran Ulander, an alto saxophonist who has featured on the Scandinavian jazz scene for many years, but whose debut here is less facile. Danielsson, wisely known for his work with Keith Jarrett, plays with smooth dependability that on paper seems at odds with Nilsen-Lo's wider blazing energies. In practice they combine effectively

surging well Ulander's manner of edging anxiously around melodic material and teasing it at until it flays, he probes doggedly until he unlocks an additional reserve of acerbicity. In the course of the probing, Danielsson and Nilsen-Lo have a more opportunist to state their own case. *Townorchestrahouse* is more vital, but enthusiasm for Nilsen-Lo's powerful and lively drumming will appreciate his input into the recording too.

QUARTET NOIR LUGANO WCTO CD

Clad in black, staring out from the cover of Lugano are pianist Martin Grappel, drummer Fred Hauser, saxophonist Les Linnegar and bassist Joelle Léandre. There's a quality assurance in that combination; beyond the sheer dress these are serious people. The music, in three parts, was recorded in Lugano, Switzerland a year ago. Linnegar brings highly disciplined squeals, nuzzled tones and stridulating parts from tenor and soprano. Léandre blows fragile harmonics or digs deep into the reverberant body of her instrument; Grappel plants a series of delicate chords, punches dronings or launches explosive runs along the keyboard; Hauser bows symbols, strates, clics and judicious percussion. There's a subtle beauty in the outcome: a quartet mobile and fluid in alignment, with unpredictable conjunctions rather than a crystallised collective identity — at least for the second half of the final part when the elements coagulate for a while into a chugging group vocal. That soon dissolves once more, leaving Grappel's delicate phrases coinciding with gentle cymbal wash.

IRÈNE SCHWEIZER PORTRAIT INTACT CD

LIVE AT TAKTLOS INTACT CD

Portrait is a marvelous introduction to Schweizer's playing, 14 tracks compiled from the Intel catalogue display the Swiss pianist solo, in duets with drummers Luce Mohlo, Pierre Fave, Günter Sommer, Jan Bennink and Andrew Cyrille, with saxophonists Oen Ziegler and Co Streiff and trombonist George Lewis; and in trio with singer Midge Nicole and bassist Joelle Léandre, and notably with saxophonist Fred Anderson and drummer Hamid Drake. That history of musical eclecticism maps out the territory Schweizer occupies with her dynamism, rhythmic ingenuity and inclusive practice of improvising. She freely celebrates the impact of Monk, Cecil Taylor and Dollar Brand while remaining lucid and exuberantly herself. An 80 page booklet with essays and an interview lies in the case. And when you've sampled that enticing selection you'll surely want more. Live At Taktlos, recorded at a Zurich festival in 1984 and saved on vinyl two years later, opens with the same George Lewis duet that is featured on *Portrait*.

Visualising first by Nilsen, then by Ulander, starts a theatrical aspect on what follows. Schweizer's capacity to heighten and give depth to the dramatic aspect generates plenty of

excitement, especially with Sommer and Paul Lovens drumming. This is a welcome reissue but for the main comprehensive picture *Portrait* is a great place to start.

DAVID TAYLOR/STEVE SWELL QUINTET NOT JUST.... CMP CD

Bass trombones are a rare breed and David Taylor's versatility on the instrument has projected him into playing contexts that include the New York Philharmonic, Arthea Franklin, Duke Ellington and Steve Reich. On *Not Just....*, he is heard at length in an unusual instrumental combination with the standard trombone of CMP stalwart Steve Swell, cellist Thomas Ulrich, bassist Ken Pharo and violinist Billy Bang. The co-leaders furnish three compositions each. Bang provides the aptly named "Down Home" and there are a couple of entirely improvised pieces. This quintet explores the options from flexible swing, through tight ensemble cells and formal chamber interplay to textured abstraction. Bang, alone in the upper register, introduces folkloric elements as well as more austere monochromatic play and slides. His slightly oblique tone often locates him as the music's focal point and his playing — both pungent and colique — adds stark definition to exchanges occurring in the lower strata.

THE VANDERMARK 5 THE COLOR OF MEMORY ATYANTIC 2000

FREE FALL AMSTERDAM PUNK SMALLTOWN SUPERJAZZ FUNK

The Color Of Memory, recorded in Chicago in July 2004, features Jed Bishop on trombone, Tim Daisy drumming, Kent Kessler on double bass, with Vandermark himself and Dave Rembe scorching the reeds. Their high calibre group playing is coordinated with Vandermark's characteristic blend of steady-eyed efficiency, carefully concerned tones, muscular and force delivery with a built-in dimension of risk to be negotiated. Dedications of the eight tracks include Art Pepper, Ray Charles, Merce Cunningham and Nona Neta — that range of reference is indicative of some of the disparate currents flowing through the quintet. The musical identity of this Vandermark 5, featuring Bishop for the last time, is fully integrated an open to all kinds of connections — a mature group delivering at the peak of its form.

The two Free Fall, paying homage to their name to Jimmy Giff's remarkable 1992 10 album with Paul Ray and Steve Swallow, cases Vandermark in a generally more mellow and reflective light, though he still sounds thoroughly convincing on clarinet. He is joined on their second release by a pair of fine Norwegian musicians — pianist Håvard Wilk and ingeborg Håten — on double bass. Wilk is an expressive harmonic coldest, Håten-Håten a sturdy pivot and articulate soloist, while Vandermark confirms his adaptability, retaining his cutting edge in this more spacious context even when the mood is introspective. □

Modern Composition

Reviewed by Philip Clark

GERALD BARRY THE INTELLIGENCE PARK NMC 3800

TRIO FIBONACCI INDEPENDENCE QUADRILLES NMC CD

Frank depictions of S&M relationships in Gerald Barry's new opera *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* are presently upstaging the apple cart at English National Opera, but the most explicit aspect of his music has always been his lyrical tonal pervasiveness of familiar tonal material. *The Intelligence Park* was Barry's first opera and made a memorably tempestuous impact during its debut performances at the Almeida Opera in 1990. He took as his model Baroque opera and his plot involves an opera composer struggling to contain the characters he's created. Crazy strokes at quadruple tempo, outlandishly extreme orchestration and singing pushed to the point of hysteria tumultuously override the sometimes frank borrowings from John Stravinsky and Kurt Weill.

There's a similarly oblique angle to reality about Barry's piano trio, in *The Aynard* (2000), featured on the Trio Fibonacci's survey of recent British music. The disc borrows its title from a satirical piece by Michael Finnissy, which deconstructs ancient devices from the John Cage infiltrating the social protocols of a Thackeray novel. Mark Finney and pencils by James Clarke accompany.

LUCIANO BERO SINFONIA/EXPHRASIS DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON CD

MIFUNE/BERIO/XENAKIS/ DASHOW DEBASTAR CD

Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* for eight voices and orchestra is a cornerstone of 1960s modernism, a brilliant study of the flow of time that embraces Claude Lévi-Strauss, a Joycean fusion of text and sound, and throws in the schizoid from Mahler's second symphony for good measure. In fact, so famous is the section in which Berio collages an astonishing variety of quoted material over Mahler's original, that the rest of the work has suffered neglect. In its second movement, Berio evokes a vaporous soundscape from the syllables of Martin Luther King's name. King was shot as Berio was composing the work, and this moment of vivid new-wave-like imagery contrasts tellingly with Mahler as a pivot around which musical history spins. Conductor Peter Eötvös, London Voices and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra deliver a definitive performance.

Exphrasis is contemporary with *Sinfonia* and divides the orchestra into groups that are embedded around the concert hall. In *Cosale* (1981), the work which opens violinist Tsugi Mifune's disc, Berio once again derives an orchestral work from an unexpected source, namely his own unaccompanied *Sequitura* for solo violin. The high point of the work sees its strings surge up into a resounding wail. *Law* and *Cosale* remains one of Berio's freshest scores. Excellent performances of Kesslick's

Méka (1971) and Dékhos (1979) too, but I can't work up much enthusiasm for the 'one size fits all' electronics that dominate James Dashow's piece.

MARCO BLAAUW BLAAUW DEBASTAR CD

Trumpeter Marco Blaauw notes that when he was studying the instrument he often wondered why he bothered – "there was hardly any repertoire that I liked to play!" he deadpans. Then he discovered that Stockhausen was writing his trumpet son Markas into the action of his *Luft* opera cycle, and became inspired to establish a new generation of solo works. The final piece on Blaauw's wistful disc is a score from *Luft* for quarter-tone flugelhorn and soprano voice. Blaauw's charm probably elevates the lockstep idiomatic neutrality of Stockhausen's writing above its expressive weight and creates an exhilarating dialogue with soprano Barbara Hannigan. Other works are strictly solo – Gerald Barry, Richard Ayres, Giacomo Scelsi and Toru Takemitsu are among the composers named, but, somehow, Rebecca Saunders's perceptive *Blaauw* stands out.

MARTIN BRESNICK MY TWENTIETH CENTURY NEW WORLD CD

New York composer Martin Bresnick counts György Ligeti as one of his mentors, and there's something about his deft synthesis of styles of which Ligeti would surely approve. My Twentieth Century (2002) has a narrator declaim Don Andrew's poem celebrating the 1960s counterculture above picturesque writing for the small chamber ensemble. Whether claims for a work as "magical (the poem) into a kind of anthem for the 60s counterculture" stand up to examination is doubtful – this music is too old school to be mind expanding. More stretching are the structural trespasses that Bresnick embeds into his marimba concerto *Groce* (2000), and his fine ear for supple cello and percussion colourings in *Songs Of The Mouse People* (1999).

STEN HANSON MORE CANNED PORRIDGE PREMIER EDITION RECORDS SACD

Swedish artist Sten Hansen has had a mixed career as composer, poet and performance artist. His music is correspondingly removed from the expected vocabulary of contemporary music, and the better for it. A piece like *Kinderspiele* (2003) for voice and children's toys is typical of his daisiest approach, as fragmented children's songs popular in the 1940s are accompanied by outbursts from naïve sounding percussion and melodic instruments.

Hansen is playing with instruments more than "playing" them in the usual fashion. When he approaches writing for solo (Play Power 3, 1982) and bassoon (*Play Power* K, 1976), his childlike fascination for line and colour produces compelling results, while his extended electronic

works are a lot of odd juxtapositions and structural jolts.

MICHAEL JARRELL ECO ACCORDION CD

Swiss composer Michael Jarrell's music can sound unerringly dry and like *eco*-Pierre Boulez if performed uncaringly, but here the ensemble *Acoustic Note* find depth beyond the surface sounds. Most striking is the bass clarinet and ensemble piece *Escapes* (1986-88), which begins with an information overload and then gradually pines down over its 20 minute duration, to arrive at glacial harmonies played low in the ensemble. *Aut* (Bubing 1996) for clarinet and cello makes a virtue of its reduced instrumentation by focusing in on the minutiae of sound production. Players explore different methods of producing the same note, creating a sound palette rich in ambiguity and nuance.

ERIK SATIE VEXATIONS SARIN CD

Satie's *Vexations* (1893) has become a cause célèbre within the avant garde, anticipating many of the arguments about the serious interludes, or *sonnettes*, of John Cage's #37 by nearly 90 years. It was Cage who first mounted a complete performance of *Vexations* lasting 18 hours in 1963, and the score consists of three lines of music and Satie's instructions: "To be repeated 840 times". On the recording, Alan Marks makes do with a mere 40 repetitions (that's 70 minutes worth) but it's enough to reveal the ingenuity of Satie's concept. The slippery chromaticism he employs means it's easy to become disorientated even well into the piece, and he demands that listeners keep their eyes open throughout. Satie reveals a visionary writing about the rapid nature of ambient listening, sparkling George Winton and weighing in on the side of Morton Feldman rather than either had been.

BERND ALOIS ZIMMERMANN METAMORPHOSE WERGO CD

Bernd Alois Zimmermann was a one-off within post-war German music. He was a hardline modernist who wasn't afraid of question and parody, a composer who fused common sense (probably more successfully than Gunther Schuller) between 12-tone writing and the jazz pieces he created with the *Musical School Quintet* and a worthy exponent of a dedicated Edition on Wergo. Designed to accompany a film by the experimental Swiss film maker Michel Wagemann, *Metamorphose* (1954) switches abruptly between boogie-woogie and cabaret references to outbursts of orchestral dementia. On *Unit nen* (1964) was written for a Marcel Aymé radio play and Zimmermann's score ingeniously subverts early 20th century French neo-classicism to a constructivist manifesto. *Omnium Impetus* (1961) is purely avian for voice and ensemble – Bernd Alois Zimmermann in the sound. □



New Albion Records
www.newalbion.com

Outer Limits

Reviewed by Jim Haynes

AEMAE THE HELICAL WORD ISOACOUSTIC CD

Intentionally or otherwise, Brandon McNeil has reinvented the wheel through the electronic abstractions he's recorded under the moniker Aemae. Through software of his own design, this Oakland, California code-slinger has deftly recreated the spectral soundscapes generated by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop's vacuum tubes and filter banks. In its codette ray projections and sonified vaporizations, *The Helical Word* appears as a so-far anachronism despite its allegiance to digital technologies. Cyclical patterns of sweeping frequencies, granular synthesis and ring modulation form the basis of McNeil's compositions, like constantly rotating the linear progression of his electronic constructions from merely surging on sinewaves, making for an exceptional record from this precocious composer.

MAURIZIO PIAZZI LAND USE PSYCHONEUROSE MANIPULOID CD

For a period of some 20 years, Maurizio Bianchi decided not to make music at all and dedicate himself to his spiritual life as a Jehovah's Witness. Besides, however, his contemporary industrial aesthetic has returned to making music. While the first few cassette recordings have emboldened his stalwart fans with their New Age banality, *Psychoneurose* is a legitimate return to form. A collaboration with Land Use (the nom de plume for the inheerit unknown musician David Ried), this album has all the trappings of a Bianchi production, sporting the same electric rupturing and systemic rigidity that Bianchi produced on his material albums *Caravanserai* and *Endomorphin*. There where words stand as cacophonous soundtracks for sensors, volt agents and effectors streaming into a body already polluted by modern society, this album plays out a similarly bleak drama upon the neurological theater. Like all of the best Bianchi recordings, the listener is cast deep in an abyss bristling with tactile abstractions. As droned as some of Bianchi's electronic sounds are, he's always proven himself more than effective in transcribing the gistiest of metaphor through sound.

ANDREW CHALK SHADOWS FROM THE ALBUM SKIES RAKAWAY PRESS CD

Chalk's Time Machines has long been considered a watershed album as an ecstatic exploration of dreamtime in facilitating temporal displacement in lieu of, or in addition to, their vocational chemical appetite. For many years now, Andrew Chalk has been invoking a similar auricular alchemy, creating the most beautiful tonalities from bowed guitars and gutters in projects such as *Memor* (with Christoph Heemann) and *Oro* (with Colin Fetter and Darren Ross). As Heemann and Ross have parted ways for the moment, Chalk has repressed two extremely limited CD-Rs published through the Memor imprint *Blue Poplars* on a single disc through Chalk's own Rainway

Press. Both pieces complement each other nicely as they both drift through pleasantly dissonant textures and elegantly rippled guitar drones. While *Chalk* certainly succeeded in its conceiving a mind-altering drug through sound, Chalk may have upstaged them not only in timing time but also in channeling the grandeur of the sublime.

JODA CLÉMENT MOVEMENT + REST ALLUMAL CD

The Montreal-based composer Joda Clément works in a mode familiar to contemporary Ambient, minimalist and drone-based artists, as he seeks to bridge natural and synthetic sounds through an atmospheric wash of blurred details. Within his debut album *Movement + Rest*, Clément builds field recordings of broken rotators, trains passing in the night and snow falling under a murky grey soundfield from reverb and the sustained vibrations from a couple of synthesizers. While reverb is often employed to give the illusion of space within a recording, Clément effectively flattens each and every one of his sounds into a monochromatic arena. Ghostly fragments of a melody, a reverb, or a vocal drone occasionally emerge only to drift back into more into the shadows. While artists such as Jonathan Doldrough and Thomas Ntina have succeeded in their mediated marriage of natural and synthetic sounds, *Movement + Rest* is a tentative first step that with time might develop into something transcendental.

FENTON PUP PUP-CD

After a handful of records under the moniker Seattle 358, Dan Abrams picked up his acoustic guitar and a new pseudonym, while he's still exploring granular techniques and atmospheric textures. Abrams' first recording as Fenton purposefully delves into the sentimentality wrought by the immodesties and cadences of pop songs. It's hard to say what specific pop songs Abrams had in mind, as the producers have been thoroughly rewritten and obscured; rather, he's working through the syrupy ambivalence that's found in any given love ballad. As Abrams cycles through his digitally crisp, acoustic guitar riffs, he intentionally never goes anywhere with his songs, defying pop imperatives for bombastic hooks and catchy choruses. Pup meanders through its own digital fog and falling ambience, confident in its releases to Ego and Sello.

HERBERT FRIEDL BRADYCARD NON VISUAL OBJECTS CD

The multi-disciplined Austrian Herbert Friedl began to make a name for himself through numerous international exhibitions in which scents were emphasized as the dominant sensory experience of his installations, which also involve photography, sculpture and sound. Given the accompanying avenue that *Bradycard* Records provided for their releases by Keith Berry and The Heller Trio with William De Rudder, it's a bit disheartening that Friedl didn't drench this

release on his own Non Visual Objects label with an olfactory tinger of some sort. Nonetheless, Friedl has enjoyed some success in the equally informal field of lower case sound constructions thanks to his ongoing Improv collaborations with Bernhard Ginter. Friedl's instrument of choice is a Hungarian hammered dulcimer, which he slowly bows and digitally treats as the basis for his expressive textures. As many of the dulcimer's sounds are limited in their streeches and scrapes, his work acquires greater dynamics and a richer character when he accentuates his slow motion dissonance with a judicious use of electronics and discreet field recordings.

MICHAEL GENDREAU VITOU AUSCULTARE CD

Earning his keep as an acoustic consultant in San Francisco, Michael Gendreau has refined his sense of listening to an extraordinary level. With the aid of incredibly sensitive accelerometers, Gendreau floats on mechanical attics, resonant frequencies and untamed vibrations that could prove deleterious to architectural structures. His parallel activities as a sound artist see him engage with a conceptual framework that is predicated from the lagged pursuits of his day job, while focusing on the same acoustic phenomena. Gendreau's recordings are sounds, which otherwise might be inaudible, into that which is wholly foreign. On *Vitout*, he articulates this as a state of "half-sleep." Within the three extended suites of *Vitout*, he uses an exaggerated sense of scale to obfuscate his source materials. The most transcendental of the three pieces is found in the transformation of the hooves, whips and goings from pressured air tanks into ferocious electrostatic vibrations and static stratified hums. Likewise, Gendreau manipulates the ethereal sound from violins recorded in that of the howling buzz of a couple of wasps. Finally he infuses the acoustics from an industrialized space into a grotesque din of piercing timbres.

THE HAFER TRIO IF TAKE, THEN TAKE GFLP

Revolution on one hand, obfuscation on the other — this is the art of The Hafer Trio, whose solo technician Andrew McKenzie presents metaphysical research as sound constructions and interrelated written texts. Aesthetically speaking, McKenzie has long demonstrated a masterful control over his original sounds that fuzzer and drone as if driven from electricity singing to itself. Though the self-proclaimed trios, half-tricks and real phenomenon of *If Take, Then Take*, he engineers grandiose gestures of minimalism with a sensibility closer to his earlier work (e.g. *An Utterance Of The Supreme Vertigo*), and marked by sudden stops and hammered claps that disrupt the musical direction. In addition to the drizzle magic of McKenzie's compositions, his texts between the audience to gain knowledge of the self by deconstructing the biological, spiritual and technical instruments that have infected mankind. Within this oblique oeuvre, McKenzie

gives a frustration that he ideals may not be coming through, even though his tech-grocery sleights of hand are intended as canardums. Not all of us may be we, enough to sit in the court of the music, but at least he lets us hear how magnificent his chorus is.

JOEL STERN & ANTHONY GUERRA OUTDOOR BOWERS PSEUDO AFRICA CD

During an extended foray into London, the Australian guitar/bound object duo of Joel Stern and Anthony Guerra honed their skills in the post-Roth Row strategies that staid the electroacoustic composition and free noise improvisation. On *Outdoor Bowers*, the two generate a kinetic flurry of tactile textures from various objects scraped across guitar pick-ups and amplified through contact mics. Often mirroring the deliberate non-intentionality of free jazz percussion, these sounds slip, skitter and stumble as one of the distinctly stratified layers found throughout their recordings. Field recordings of chatty birds and muted drones coaxed from the guitar roll in as the other parallel track layers for *Outdoor Bowers*. At times, these layers are made as to appear entirely unimportant in discourse with the other sounds, creating a rather prickly noise. However, Stern and Guerra connect polyphonic loops and weaving phrases in much the same way that Steve Roden slowly merges his concrete sounds into an elegant harmonic communion.

ZOVIEET * FRANCE: MUSIC FOR A SPAGHETTI WESTERN NLANGGALCD CD

1985 marked the beginning of a very prolific period for Zovieet * France, as the enigmatic collective of pop/industrial aesthetes started recording their four part series entitled *Charm*, *Common*, *Chaos*, *Prophecy*, *Mus For A Spaghetti*. *Western* was recorded at the same time — however, it remained unreleased until the Austrian label Klanggalerie recently uncovered the tapes. Like the album *Stems*, *Looney Tunes* And *Squid* *Common* from the CCPD series, *Spaghetti* Western overtly expresses disgust with sluggish US foreign policy being supported by the senior Ronald Reagan, as Zovieet * France acoustically Wagner's voice into spiraling spectrums that emphasize the dissonance of his charged political speeches. However, Zovieet * France kept their political statements brief and moved onto other matters, in particular their hypnotic use of tape loops and effects that appear as the lead punk version of Berry Rife's time lag accumulation: *zowieet * france*. Their signature battery of zowieet-punked notes, hand percussion, breathy flutes and extended vocalizations through all of these effects, creating arresting riffs for imagined cultures. Despite a smothering of rough edges and anemalous sketches, *Mus For A Spaghetti* Western is a well-crafted recording and a very welcome release, given the paucity of Zovieet * France material in the past decade. □

Print Run

New music books: devoured, dissected, dissed



Left: George W. Johnson, from *Lost Sounds*. Right: Tom Zé's symbol, from *Cockatoo*

LOST SOUNDS: BLACKS AND THE BIRTH OF THE RECORDING INDUSTRY, 1890-1919

TIM BROOKS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS, \$34.95 HBK
BY BRIAN MORTON

Karma led another strider under salty Mississippi mud, but even in quieter years the damp and humidity of New Orleans was eating away at parts of the city's rich musical culture. Of the many commercial cylinders made by one of Louisiana's pioneering black recording artists, just one copy of one performance has come into Tim Brooks's hands. Now all but lost under a rumble of surface noise, but safely taped for posterity, it features Louis "Red" Vesser in his alter ego as Bruders Rasmus roasting the mock sermon "Adam And Eve And De Winter Apple". The delivery is radically different from the gassy caricatured blackface delivery of white performers. Vesser speaks naturally and without overacting exaggeration. It is a voice from a vanishing past.

Lost Sounds is not just an incredibly detailed history of pre-Jazz Age black recording. It is also an urgent caution call for the preservation of a fragile heritage. Careless handling, time, chance and neglect have all conspired to make the work of early black artists. What little is left can be sampled on a double CD set from Archeophone Records and it makes for remarkable listening.

The early history of sound recording is fairly well known, not least the low priority given to music on Thomas Alva Edison's famous list of point list of potential uses for his technology. There were practical reasons for this, in fairness. Early equipment required quiet environments like some other poorly, leaving bass, chants and holies, and the almost lost art of whistling. Easily the most famous of the artists Brooks covers is George W. Johnson, creator of "The Whistling Coon" and "The Laughing Song" (later reworked by British comedian Charlie Chaplin as "The Laughing Policeman"). Johnson's life is an object lesson in the paradoxes of black-white relations at the turn of the 20th century; his *afterlife* is also a salutary reminder that history itself is as woody phreatic and as vulnerable to distortion as those early cylinders.

Most people know of Johnson from Fred Gosberg's 1942 book *The Music Goes Round*. It offers a vivid snapshot of a "tragic Negro" whose "name and notes [came from] just two titles", but who died badly "hanged for throwing his wife out of a window when in a drunken frenzy". Great star, but start. Johnson and his common-law wife Rosan Strain lived in a New York basement for a start. He was also acquitted of her death, after a brazenly misandrous prosecution in which he was offered a surprising level of white middle class support.

What's more, fame he may have had, but Gosberg's "riches" are without thinking. Johnson

was paid a flat fee for recordings (albeit many times since cylinders couldn't be readily copied like later shellac discs) and made nothing more, no matter how successful a recording was in the phonograph booths or at fairs.

Johnson died in 1914. The first jazz recordings weren't made until three years later, and everyone knows the paradox of that: the Original Dixieland Jazz Band was all-white, just as Johnson is the only black face in a group photograph of early recording artists and technicians taken on Edison's estate in 1900. Brooks can't establish with certainty that he was the first black artist to make a cylinder but between the emergence of the "Whistling Coon & Laughing Darkey" and The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, he has tracked down the stories of some 40 audio pioneers, names steadily more familiar as he moves from The Unique Quartette and Vesser to WC Handy, Bart Williams, Eubie Blake and even bawdy champion Jack Johnson, whose impossibly enigmatic descriptions of pizazz men was a double god to white readers who had not only seen their man beaten but by someone far more articulate than themselves. Mike Dimes may have given him comic status with a non-talking audience, but Johnson was a recording star in his own right.

Gosberg rightly described George Johnson's voice as "low-pitched and fruity, like a cantaloupe". The first real Afro-American contralto to record, again as far as Brooks can determine,

was Daisy Lapley who in December 1910 joined bantene Carroll Clark in Columbia's New York studio to put down the hymn "I Surrender All".

Significantly, she didn't even take a solo line. Brooks has built substantially on the earlier work of scholars like Ann Douglas, Robert Coates and John Gotoch, Tim Gracyk and a host of dogged discographers. His research is impeccable, his conclusions quiet and unfurled. Dick Spottawood's appendix on Caribbean and South American recordings adds an important dimension.

Inevitably the name that hovers, mostly unspoken, over *Lost Sounds* is that of Buddy Bolden, who ironically came into his prime after the Louisiana Photograph Company began winding down. In 1919, his trombone player Willy Cornish said that Buddy had made a record for a "white company". That must have been before 1898, before Cornish went off to serve in Cuba, and it was apparently a march rather than a blues.

Even so, it remains the Holy Grail of jazz recording. Wrongly so, assume it did exist, and it becomes a warning about how precarious a legacy the first black recording artists left behind — if jazz's prime Adam could be imagined so easily to wither, how much easier for his successors, all those Cairns and Abbits, Jayfishs, Horns and Hoalts to disappear in the floods of time. For some of them, this discographical Ark has probably come too late. □

¡COCHINANDO!: 50 YEARS OF LATIN ALBUM COVER ART

PABLO YGLESÍAS
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS P01 218/99

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

During the past 20 years, anthologies of record pictures have appeared in droves. Some purport to survey the most memorable imagery of various eras, as with the *Hip-Hop Album Cover Albums*—which begin the trend of rock-oriented coffee table books—or Michael Ochs's 2000 *Record Covers Of Late*, which caters to collectors who have sharpened their teeth on picture sleeves for punk, 45s, vintage Country & Western, funk and exotica covers, and even *Radical Album Cover Art: Part 3*, which appears to be aimed exclusively at *Wired* readers. Perhaps this flurry of interest in the visual marketing of recorded music reflects the tacit acknowledgment that record covers have come full circle, from the spartan paper jackets of 1950s discs through the noxious excesses of

70s girlfriend covers, to the diminished canons of CD booklets.

¡Cochinando! trumps the majority of album art collections on several levels, conveying cultural data, pocket histories of musical sub-genres and lyrical humor. Political thought has always run close to the surface in any field of entertainment aimed at a Latin audience, and so Pablo Yglesías's notes are informed by the reality of ghettoized musicians struggling for recognition in a marketplace largely shaped by the preferences and financial hegemony of white listeners. His purview of Latin music is also encompassing, one senses equal affection for—and intimate knowledge of—Cuban records of the 50s, Latin soul and boogaloo from the 60s, post-psychotic crossover material, and the albums sanctioned or banned outright by the governments of Cuba or Brazil.

With a mind to crossover appeal, Latin cover art often paralleled the look of contemporary rock album covers (the artist adorned as film

star, outlaw or shaman, indicating the apex of art director's influence throughout the 70s); others reflected the deep rooted religious beliefs unique to the Latin audience, as with the numerous covers alluding to the Senneta and folclore motifs. The theme of rebellion is a constant alarm throughout. The salsa artist got of Joe Cuba's *Buster Got It*, the Funk label's cover for Willie Colón's *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly* immortalized obligatory spaghetti western imagery, and the Afrocentric visuals featured by Mandrill all address the cultural confinement felt by Latinos in the music business. None of these, however, puts so subtle a spin on twisting the powers that be as does the sleeve art for Tom Zé's 1973 album, *Jogos De Gilos (All Of The Eyes)*. Set aside by side with the reptilian art gracing Amílcar Barnabé's, *Clave Crocodilo*, Zé's cover art first gleams (seems to feature) and then reveals: photography, the notes reveal this sort of image as a marble nested in a woman's anus. Zé remains unrepentant, urging

his cover model ("even if she has grandchildren") to come forward; Zé, ever the Topicalist rebel, detaches his record cover "which could be morally doubtful, today is even patriotic."

Most album cover books wear the art of the music's initial release literally on their sleeves, with remembered live sporting punchbowl or cut scenes, the inadvertent cartoon fodder caused by years of kiddies mimicking the shape of the disc within. In contrast, the sleeve collected in ¡Cochinando! appear to have eluded the ravages of time, each one sitting flawlessly on the page. This is probably testament both to careful photoethic technique and the author's scrupulous calling of the best archives. The visuals at the core of Yglesías's history of record packaging glow in saturated colours, well matched by his vibrant writing. Incidentally, the rules employed in this record collection omit a seductive women reclining dishevelled posters from the psychedelic era, and adding Prolestar value to this absorbing tome. □

OTHER PLANETS: THE MUSIC OF KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

ROBIN MACONE
SCORSEBORN PRESS P01 218/99

BY PHILIP CLARK

The New Zealand composer and music journalist Robin Maccone has probably written more published copy on Karlheinz Stockhausen than any other writer. His *Worlds Of Stockhausen* was published in 1976, with an update and a book of conversations (*Stockhausen On Music*) appearing in the late 1980s, and such dogged devotion to his cause is both a strength and a weakness. Although they have apparently had ups and downs, Maccone has gained sufficient trust for Stockhausen to talk relatively openly—often through bending the grant man's ear comes at a cost.

Although the notorious incident when Stockhausen mouthed off about the events of

11 September is in itself tabloid title-tattle, Maccone lacks the objectivity and the wit to explore what the implications might be for Stockhausen's grasp on reality, and mention of it is buried in a single sentence near the opening. His adulation, too, feels uncritically clothed—Maccone has a habit of disintegrating into sub-a-Ran Hubbard heroics. "A moment in the history of the Big Bang when the expansion of the local universe has reached its maximum and the musical configuration of the instruments has stabilised to a point where integrative communication is possible" is his too-caring description of Stockhausen's *Lichter-Wasser*.

It's in the interest of others—and their leaders—to keep analysis at arms length, and Maccone justifies writing this by pointing again at musical analysis. The book cover contains the rather garish line "Maccone writes with technical analysis" (wee by whose definition?),

and Maccone further rationalises his approach in an introduction entitled "On Telling The Truth". Arnold Schoenberg's famous letter to Wolfram Rodek, in which the composer argues against the value of note-for-note analysis, ("I have always been dead against... seeing how it's done, whereas I have always helped people to see what it is") is cited, but Schoenberg surely didn't intend his words to give license to Big Bang psycho-babble.

This is a pity because Maccone is also perceptive. His description of musical notation as a "map, with pitch as latitude and time as longitude" becomes a telling springboard for his discussion of how Stockhausen enlarged on this principle for *Plus-Minus* (1963), a score in which performers interpret schemata of symbols and data before they play. The complexity of *Plus-Minus* is part of the composer's message: serial music is hard work. Maccone writes on a route into his discussion of how *Plus-Minus*

exemplifies "the model and spirit of traditional German educational philosophy." References to William Blake, Malinowski's *Sexual Life Of Savages*, Jung, Huxley and Claude Lévi-Strauss are not part, but, although undeniably interesting, they become an empty indulgence because the musical processes themselves have been relegated to the sideline.

The book proceeds then, perched between scholarship and spam doctrine. There is indeed something supernatural about early and middle-period stockhausen like *Gruppi* and *Ahnen*, and when the music fits the billing Maccone is on safe ground. But as he approaches Stockhausen's recent output, especially the desperately incoherent and often damned *Licht cycle* of 1990s, he becomes increasingly implausible. His, moreover, the suspicion that Stockhausen himself is a Machiavellian shadow in the background might be unfounded but is difficult to avoid. □

THE TROUBLE WITH MUSIC

MAT CALAHAN
AK PRESS P01 218/99

BY DAVID STUBBS

Reading San Francisco veteran musicians'/producer Mat Calahan's impassioned, despairing, ambitious survey of the state and role of music today, one finds oneself in the grip of contradictory emotions. As he invokes the heavyweights of yesterday—Mae, Attila, Plato, Walter Benjamin, George Clinton—in his rage against the burgeoning forces of corporatism, which have stolen, by stealth, the "people's" music from them and then sent it back to them in a bloodless, banalised version, a deliberately deconstructive "anti-music" under the label of the so-called "popular", you share his fiery indignation. However, when he speculates vaguely on what a true music of the proletariat might sound like, earthy, joyful and springing from the abundant wellspring of working class

deceit, then glance back at the introduction which is penned by Boff from Chumbawamba, you very much hope that anything remotely like Chumbawamba is not what he has in mind.

His assertion that the blues/gospel dichotomy of African-American music is the key to its greatness and its validity, in that both the sacred and the profane, God and the Devil have their vital role to play in a popular music that reflects the authentic (and neglected) human spirit. But then, there are times when, coming as he does from a vaguely Marxist perspective, you wonder if Calahan is motivated ultimately not by anger or despair but by a lately old fashioned optimism about the perfectibility of the human condition, one that has no chance of being implemented except with tragic consequences. And said it cynicism, but when he addresses today's generation of downloaders directly as if they are present and attending to the text, to

download for free, by all means, but make some sort of compensatory donation to worthy musicians' causes, you feel like it's the trendy virus trying to urge a handful of unruly youths to take advantage of the honesty bar in the corner. There are other statements along the way, an excessive use of exclamation marks! Also, critics are currently dismissed en masse with the old "dancing about architecture" chestnut and as more consumer guides, lacking Calahan's moral guidance as to their true purpose. Moreover, the author's assertion that John Lennon's "Working Class Hero" represents the repressed rage of working class people the world over, lacks stance to say the least.

Yet for all this, the more you read, the more you're inflated and even persuaded by Calahan's prose. His message is the very basic concerns of the production and consumption of music, historically and socially, breaking these down to their absolutely primary components.

He's quite right, too, in asserting that the state of popular music spooks a great deal about the state of mankind, something the ancient Greeks recognised but to which even today, many otherwise intelligent people are oblivious. His time of historical relevance is immense and judicious, especially when he meticulously exposes the flaws in the thinking of just-war musical thinkers Theodore Adorno and Charles Seeger—the latter dangerously mixing up "cultural workers" with agricultural workers in his anti-technological stance.

Finally, Calahan concludes on a note of optimism. He cites figures showing that sales of recorded music are going down, but—ha ha, who gives a damn?—for sales of musical instruments are going up. Could it be that, faced with the systematic stultification of popular culture perpetrated by the corporations that people are slowly beginning to take back the rivers of production into their own hands? □

Cross Platform

Sound in other media. This month: Rolf Julius explains why sound and vision are simply opposite sides of the same coin. By Rahma Khazam



Rolf Julius (left) and his sculptures, *Brass* (2008), *Music For The Eyes* (1982/2004) and *Why Pink* (2011)



"The surface of a sound interests me," Rolf Julius once wrote. "Is it round or angled? Raw or smooth? I'm also interested in the distance of a sound. Does it sound different close than further away. And if you bend down to pick up a sound..."?

These are questions that go to the heart of Rolf Julius's work. "I even made a piece where you lay on your back and put speakers on your eyes, so you could look into the sound," reminisces the Berlin based sound artist, sitting amid the hubbub of a noisy Paris cafe. For the past 30 years, Julius's minimal pieces, which have made him one of the leading exponents of contemporary sound art, have been teasing out connections between sound and visuals. Take the pieces he is currently showing at Paris's Galerie Luis Vancy, a longtime supporter of his work. The lid on Japanese soup cup opens up to reveal a speaker covered with powdery black pigment.

Muffled gurgles escape from the cup as the pigment twists and contorts, making the sounds visible. A little way away, two small stones topped with tiny speakers are engaged in a muttered dialogue. Meanwhile, by the window, soft chords issue forth from a speaker attached to a bowl of water, breathing life into the image of rippling water on the video screen close by. As Julius comments: "Water in a bowl, a speaker, sound: what is it? Nothing. But when you put them together in a special way, then all of a sudden, if you're lucky, it's a piece – it's as if it's living its own life."

Julius discovered his passion for sound and visuals the very first time he used them together. Born in the German port city of Wilhelmshaven in 1939, he studied visual art in Bremen and Berlin. It was not until the mid-70s that he began using sound, while working as a photographer in Bremen. He invited

members of the public to enter a booth one by one and bare their backs, which he then photographed. "People were very nervous, so I put on some music, pieces by Robert Ashley and Pauline Oliveros, and they liked it so much that they relaxed," he recalls. "It was something different and they [realized] it was art. From that moment, I became aware that music or sound could change situations."

Towards the end of the 70s, Julius moved to Berlin, where he discovered the budding sound art scene. "I was very impressed by it," he says. "I also wanted to create music [for my pieces], but I couldn't because I did not know how to compose. So I started with one note." Julius is referring to that first note he made by striking a piece of iron with an iron bar and recording the resulting sound. He then copied it onto a lower grade tape, obtaining a slightly different sound. He had taken photos of a dyke and decided to combine his two sounds with the photographs. Each photo showed the slight curve of the dyke against the horizon, taken from a slightly different angle. "I had a line of six photos and I put a speaker at either end," he explains. "Then all of a sudden the small curves started to move up and down, they began to dance!" He showed this work, titled *Dike Line* (1979), to art activist and curator René Block, who immediately invited him to take part in his forthcoming show in West Berlin's Akademie der Künste. The year was 1980 and the occasion was the mythical show *Für Augen Und Ohren*, which brought together works by the likes of Laurie Anderson, John Cage, Luigi Russolo, Nam June Paik and Bill Fontana for the first major exhibition on sound and the visual arts yet to be held in Europe. It was also around that time that Julius launched a concert series comprising such memorable pieces as *Concert For A Frozen Lake*

(1982), in which recorded piano sounds were played on the edge of an iced-up lake. He used the same method as *Dike Line*, although in this case the recordings bore little resemblance to the original sound, due to the quality of the tapes. "This music was more like a vibraphone than a piano. It was perfect for a frozen lake because it evoked the material of ice," he observes. Soon after the Berlin concerts, Julius moved to New York on a grant and was allocated a studio at PS1. His career took off as he gradually began giving performances and creating installations throughout Europe, Japan and the United States.

In the meantime, Julius was pursuing his experiments. *Music For The Eyes* (1981), in which the viewer placed small speakers over his eyes, demonstrated that, in the absence of any visual input, listening becomes a physical experience involving the entire body. Another important discovery occurred when he was working on the idea of having sound come from the inside of a stone. "I wanted to put sounds into a big stone by making a hole in it, but it was too complicated," Julius says. "Then I discovered that when I placed a speaker on top of a stone, the sound appeared to be coming from inside it." Getting sounds to talk was also a way of drawing attention to his materials and their intrinsic properties, which is another abiding theme in Julius's work.

He was likewise developing a better understanding of the relations between sound and visuals. "If you go from one medium to another, there has to be a link," he insists. For Julius, a sound goes with an object when it reflects the object's surface and texture. "If I combine a normal clear piano sound with a dirty red pigment, it will strike you as odd," he remarks. "This is the kind of experience a sound artist acquires because he knows about the texture of sounds. A composer



would not work this way. He doesn't know about the texture, or what I would call the surface of the sound."

Although Julius's work is often spoken about in terms of synaesthesia, he takes exception to the tendency. It is the combined effect of sound and visuals that interests him. "In my work," he says, "you concentrate on both the visual and the acoustic elements and, taken together, they result in something new."

The soundworld that Julius uses is highly specific. Utilising processed natural and instrumental sounds as well as simple devices such as buzzers, he produces what he calls "small sounds". These soft, yet compelling, murmurs or hums retain a natural feel and are often suggestive of frogs, crickets or birds. "My artificial sounds are sometimes more natural than nature. Crickets, for instance, do not sing with their mouths, but move their legs; a buzzer does the same, it's mechanical," Julius points out. Most important however, are the pauses between his sounds, which orchestrate the viewer's experience of the piece. "Say you have a piece consisting of red and black pigments," he explains. "You play a sound, then the pause is too long, so you look at the red and black. Then you play another sound, then you look, and so on."

In *Big Gray* (1994), sound is conducive to concentration and stillness. This piece was created for a building situated in one of the noisiest streets in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Rather than fight against the ambient din by raising the volume of his piece, Julius went one better when the viewer concentrated on the sounds, he became oblivious to the noise outside. "I found that my senses relaxed and I was able to listen to the entire composition without paying attention to what was going on elsewhere," he says. The notions

of concentration and stillness crop up in many of Julius's works. The calm, meditative atmosphere emanating from his pieces stems from the hypnotic intensity of his soft whirs, which hold the viewer's attention. Creating stillness by means of sound is a notion that harks back to John Cage, for whom stillness, or silence, necessarily comprised of sound of some kind. It likewise stems from Julius's experiences in Japan – a country that immediately took to his work and with which he has many natural affinities. "Japan helped me to understand silence," he says. "You go to a Zen temple, and you can understand something about it."

The Zen-like detachment and simplicity that run through Julius's work mark him out from the majority of contemporary sound artists. He has a close affinity with Japanese artist Akio Suzuki, whose work likewise references nature, while displaying a similar freshness and economy of means. He also feels a proximity to Morton Feldman, whose pared down aesthetic is mirrored in the minute differences between the six photos constituting *Dike Low*. Even more important, however, is John Cage, whose conception of silence and openness to all sounds were a liberating influence. Yet Julius has always kept his distance from Cage. "It's very difficult to become an independent artist when you are close to a figure like John Cage," he says. "Most artists connected to him could not move by themselves. They were always saying, 'John said I did a good piece.' In my case, [Takehisa] Kosugi knew him very well and told me stories about him. But I was too shy to talk to him and I am happy I only watched from a distance."

Julius's forthcoming projects testify to his continued independence and creativity. He will be showing some of his video images in Berlin in November, while next year's Märzmusik will feature painter Aki

Takehisa performing one of his graphic scores. This is by no means his first attempt at composing for others. Vocal ensemble *die maulwerker* presented a memorable performance of a series of graphic scores titled *Songbooks 1-6* in Cologne in July 2004.

Meanwhile, Julius is preparing for a major show in Bochum next April, which will probably include a symposium and contributions from like-minded artists and friends, ranging from Akio Suzuki, Takehisa Kosugi, Mak Yui and the dancer Junko Wado, to John Cage and Kasimir Malevich.

Julius may have been at the forefront of the nascent German sound art scene in the 1980s, along with the likes of Christina Kubisch and Hans Peter Kuhn, yet he remains modest about his achievements. "I was like a kid next to people like Kosugi and David Tudor," he says. It is not for nothing that Julius considers Kosugi and Tudor as precursors. They may not be sound artists as such, but David Tudor's *Rainforest*, for instance, broke new ground in the 70s in terms of its sound sources and their placement in space. As for the new generation of sound artists, they are not as obsessed with sound as the artists of Julius's generation, who had to contend with the resistance of the art and music establishment, not to speak of the public. "[Today's sound artists] are more open," he concludes. "They don't care whether they are working with sound or visuals; they mix everything. Thanks to the people who came before, they have realised that sound is not such a big deal – it's just a material like any other." □ *Wet Music* is at the Galerie L'ars Vivra, Paris, until 3 November. *Root Julius* will be taking part in *Playing John Cage*, a group show at the Arncliffe, Bristol, from 5 November until 15 January 2006, and *Kettle's Yard*, Cambridge, 28 January until 2 April 2006.



Left: Paul Panthuyzen rebbing the wires. Right: More time for The Minutemen

STEVE RODEN + PAUL PANTHUYZEN
LONDON SERPENTINE
GALLERY PAVILION

BY JULIAN COWLEY

This year's Serpentine Gallery summer pavilion in Hyde Park was designed by Portuguese architects Iwan Szia and Eduardo Souto de Moura, and it has the air of a gigantic turtle that has lumbered across from the neighbouring Isle. Its translucent polycarbonate antipode slaps about four feet above the ground and its therefore not ideal for an evening concert venue in England on the day after the autumnal equinox. The organizers had accordingly fitted heaters to ward off the chill as night fell. It's part of the agenda of the annual Pavilion series that these built structures should be physically experienced as such, so it was assigned programming to commission the long overdue London debut of Paul Panthuyzen, a Dutch sound artist whose work has for many years engaged imaginatively with the acoustic properties of architectural space.

First, though, Steve Roden, from Los Angeles, presented a piece compiled from sounds gathered from the site, some sent to him over the course of the preceding three months. As Roden set an idiosyncratically channeling his half-hour composition through speakers, there was plenty of opportunity for the audience to look around and take in features of the environment. The piece was characteristically gentle, episodic in structure and casually allows traffic noise swept in beneath the building's shell, a continuous wisp tapping around Roden's sounds. His cracks started to resemble the staccato of howling cats — the pavilion cast as upturned bed. A lengthy harmonica sequence took on composable analogic sense — modular rectangles of the structure suggesting blowing holes of a gigantic mouth organ. A sequence involved toy glockenspiel, played live and name — the pavilion became a musical box, in California the metaphors may have heightened the experience, in London in autumn they fell disappointingly flat.

Chairs were taken to face the opposite end of the structure. Panthuyzen looked odd-like as he made his way to the long strings he had fixed

there. He adjusted the installation with coaxed hands, arms raised like a deepspeaker slowly panning the breadth of the pavilion, turning and slowly pacing back. And so on. For some while. Generating edgy tones, brittle dissonance and occasional haloes of overtone glow. Sometimes Panthuyzen turned to face the audience, his whitened hands moving with a conductor's gestures. The ingredients for a special occasion were in place but somehow they never coalesced. The piece needed: a sizable percentage of the audience despaired, assuming their physical experience of the 2005 pavilion had ground to a halt. After a chaotic transmission and with remaining audience members still chattering, Panthuyzen, looking suitably perplexed, embarked on a finale. This time the richness of the sound was immediately apparent, the strings fused into a harmonic haze and the promise of the evening came close to being realized. But it's getting late in the year for events that admit the open air and Panthuyzen has maybe had to wait too long for that overdue initiation.

SUPERSENSITIVE

HUNE GRAMMOPHON DVD
BY DAVID STUBBS

Supsensitive are well named, not because silence is much of a component in their bus, often equally sound, but because of the silence in which this Norwegian quartet have chosen to enshroud themselves. The 109 minute Supersensitive 7, a document of a live recording they made at Parkfest, Oslo in August 2004, comes in a similar sleeve to its predecessors, its elegant typface confining itself to a few minor technical credits but offering nothing in the way of illustration, song titles, group member details or playing credits. One is forced to confront this mountaintop music without the grip of context — it won't come to you.

Odd, then, that they should have chosen to make a DVD at all — furthermore, that it should be a dual layer disc, enhancing the picture quality, since Supersensitive are deliberately obscured in a grainy, black and white darkness, their half-lit features like flickering suns as they play. But why have any sort of visual distraction, be it keyboardist Ståle Storlekken's matchbox whiskers, or the monastic demi-



presence of Heide Sten, as Deshpred, responsible for "audio was?"

The advantage is that one at least gets to witness the physical interaction undertaken by Supersensitive, without there being the remotest danger of their lapsing into the spectacular posturing of would-be icons. And play they do, as effectively as anyone in the world right now, accessible yet challenging, laconic yet austere, probing a scarily and neglected so man's land between jazz and rock improvisation. Characteristically, they start sweetly, meditatively, with trumpeter Arve Henriksen blowing muted, muted plumes into the air as Storlekken, Sten and drummer Jarle Weipstad potter meaningfully about, before the skies begin to darken and the activity heightens, as if were approaching a war zone. As The Wire's Rob Young once noted, their music is prone to moments of catatonia of the best sort, of sheer, exhilarating proleptic and preoccupation. And, while Supersensitive do repeat some of their bodies over the full stretch (oh my, Proggy keyboard ostentations, sampled voices live transmissions from the frontlines) suggesting their bag of tricks is not bottomless, they sound like a group who are many decades from growing weary or fructose.

WE JAM ECONO: THE STORY OF THE MINUTEMEN
TIM HAYDEN DIRECTORS 2006 30 MINS
BY MIKE BARNES

This documentary film starts in the 1970s with two onetime working class 13 year olds, D Boon and Mike Watt, meeting at Park Park in San Pedro, California. More accurately, the former fell out of a tree and landed on the latter. They became best friends, sharing a love of history and groups like Blue Oyster Cult and Creedence Clearwater Revival. Reflexes to express themselves, they started playing music together. This activity yielded the Bright Danger Band, The Reactionaries and culminated in The Minutemen, who from 1979-85 produced some of the most searing rock music of the period.

What makes their collaboration so extraordinary is that they didn't really know what they were doing. Or more precisely they didn't know what they weren't supposed to do. For example, both friends were guitarists after a

fashion, but D Boon's mother insisted her son played guitar in the group. (Watt's mother also played her part in the story, as a regular attendee of the group's early shows). Watt then went off to buy a bass, thinking it was just a guitar with four strings, and embarrassed himself in the guitar shop by mauling about at this huge instrument held been given to be out. When they first started playing, they didn't even realize they were supposed to tune up to each other.

Watt became influenced by funk bass players simply because they were the most easily heard. He and D Boon soon embraced music by The Pop Group and Captain Beefheart and created an original musical vocabulary whose angular forms were helped into shape by drummer George Hurley, a formidable, technically advanced and idiosyncratic player. Boon's headlong vocals, meanwhile, were alive to ferocious, treble chord work. Their strange chemistry can be seen in action on some tremendous live footage from the early 80s, where the stage host slammers appear nonplussed by these loud, aerobic songs, some of which lasted around 30 seconds.

Director Tim Inven conducted dozens of interviews with musicians, writers, friends and associates — including Greg Ginn, Neil Cline, Henry Rollins, artist Raymond Pettibon and Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers — and deftly offers their testimonials to punctuate the story. But most illuminating are those with the group from 1985 — shortly before D Boon died in a car crash — and with the two surviving group members.

This film was obviously made with a lot of love, but not a whiff of sentimentality. Watt is particularly successful in evoking an era, apart in time, but culturally remote, now when kids realized they had been coaxed by stadium rock for too long and could actually take control of their own musical destiny. The Minutemen's crazy desires are summed up by their recording of their 1984 album, Double Nickels Do It Best. They had already recorded two sides but on hearing that SST labelmates Black Flag had made a double album Zerkow, they wrote, rehearsed and recorded 20 more songs in a fortnight. As Mike Watt says today, "Nothing about us seemed easily understood." □

The Inner Sleeve

Artwork selected this month by Jonny Trunk



**ALESSANDRO
ALESSANDRONI &
VARIOUS ARTISTS
INTERMEZZI JAZZ 04 A**
SR JAZZ SERIES CIRCA 1969

ART DIRECTION UNKNOWN

I shall always remember my first SR LP sighting. It was almost as hard hitting as the first SR sound I heard. SR, aka Seris, was a small and experimental label started by Alessandro Alessandroni, Ennio Morricone's whistler,

guitarist, arranger and choir master. The Italian label's output was small, sporadic and musically just for use in film and TV. In short, this is high class Italian library music.

Everything about the sleeve graphics, from the spiky SR logo on the top right to the spinning white 'wood' lines, still make my eyes go funny. And I'm always charmed by the 'needle to record' imagery located at the heart of the sleeve. It's also a very basic, inexpensive sleeve to produce as it's just a long, printed

card folded in half and only reproduced in two colours.

For me, I see a strange code here — the words, numbers, lines and letters all combine in an accidental, but brilliant, way to say something very groovy, although in a foreign tongue that I don't quite understand. Maybe it's living in science or sound, maybe it's the two combined — but either way, I am intrigued beyond belief. And remember, it's a library disc, so it's not for commercial usage, not

for the public's consumption and never meant for sale.

Library LPs have a graphic tone and language all their own, which is what attracts me to them, and is the reason behind a new book I've been working on. And to me this particular sleeve is a perfect example of the genre, different art from a secret and weird musical world. ☐ The Music Library, conceived and compiled by Jonny Trunk, is published by Fuel this month. www.fuel-design.com

Go To:

For appetites whetted by Alan Cummings's incisive account of the genesis of Japan's free music scene (see page 30), there are some tasty morsels out there. **Kaoru Abe** (www.yam.or.jp/~t_diana/sk.html) is well served on this site — his English-language discography is a thorough one — even though the bulk of the pages here are in Japanese. **Masayuki Takayanagi** gets a better deal, at least as far as non-Japanese readers are involved. The first is a highly reliable site containing a chronology, detailed lists of his concerts and writings, plus some information about recent showings of Takayanagi videos, the second a detailed release listing (www.15.021.us.jp/~guter21/www.diana.de.no.jp/~katty/discography...e.html). **PSF Records**, the label so important in the history of Japanese free jazz live recordings, offers a well constructed and user-friendly site — its thumbnail discographies of the various albums are pretty helpful, too — for collectors

(www.psfrecords.com). For those wanting more on the history of the Japanese jazz coffee shops, there are a couple of good places to go in the absence of a time-machine (www.papefing.net.com/yabuno/jazzciv.html, www.dogbox.com/d/LitPARAJ.html), the visual element (www.mozhi.ac.jp/library/muse/cybermuse/cf/taiki/taiji.html) is represented by this exhibition of poster art from the avant garde theatre troupes of the 1960s and 70s.

For lovers of Baftese music even with society over suitable Christmas presents for musical relatives, lessons in Indonesian dance and music, and indeed, a gamelan of your very own can be had (www.goarchi.com) with relative ease from the **Yapasan Poelissen** centre.

No apologies for rewriting the **UbuWeb Foundation** (www.ubuweb.com), who have recently launched their radio station. It is now a 24 hour MP3 stream, containing files randomly chosen from their massive archive. Exploring

the intersection between contemporary visual art, music and performance, UbuWeb is a trove of interviews, video clips and the unusual — the spoken performances of Klaus Kinski chief among them. Its recent additions read like a wish list for weird, people like us (and it includes, naturally, the complete recordings of People Like Us). Alongside the Morton Feldman archive recordings and some new realisations of John Cage works, there's a gem of Rolling Stones recordings in **Mick Jagger's Invocation Of My Demon Brother**. Dating from 1969, his 11 minutes of Moog synthesizer roars were recorded as a soundtrack for Kenneth Anger's film of the same name. The film's chequered history (it came about when footage for Anger's *Lucifer Rising* was stolen in 1967 by a Manson gang member) is well documented here, and one senses that Jagger's rhythmic, Moog code-like bloops might actually mean something. Ula.

LOUISE GRAY



On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts, events in the flesh



PHOTOS: DAVID THORNTON/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES

ARTHURFEST LOS ANGELES BARNSDALL ART PARK

BY IRIFION COLEY

Arthur is a free, bi-monthly culture newspaper out of Los Angeles. In the interest of open disclosure, it's worth mentioning that Thurston Moore and I write a column for it. But this isn't about that. This review is about a two-day festival that was assembled by the paper's staff. We had no input at all. But I've had been able to make suggestions, it's hard to see how they could've added much to what was a truly boss event.

The setting was the first plus. Barnsdall Art Park is on a hill overlooking Hollywood and Los Angeles. It's a shockingly pleasant and verdant spot, containing a fine Frank Lloyd Wright building, some municipal-style architecture and a large open field. This allowed the festival to run three events simultaneously throughout the two days. There was a big outdoor stage with decent sight lines and so-so sound. There was a 275-seat theatre for the louder groups and on the main stage and a smaller outdoor stage set up to accommodate the quieter artists.

The line-up was the second plus. Since Youth headlined the first day, Yo!o Ono the second,

Opposite page (clockwise from top left): Otis Redding Concert, Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon, Yo!o Ono at Arthurfest, Smegma and Bill Harts at Wooden Octopus

and the roster was a pretty good selection of stuff plucked from across the underground rock/indie/dirty/whatever map. Many of the artists had been championed in *Arthur* at one time or another, but there were also a few that were pretty goddamn obscure. And some of these were among the best.

My 15-year-old son's pick was Australia's Wolfmother, a kind of thrug-rock too visually reminiscent of The Hammerheads Gories. Their music was visualized as heavy-Sab-drag, but they pulled it off with more good cheer than you'd dare to expect and better screams than any of us deserve. They may have actually been the most interesting new group on the main stage that first day. Which is not meant to disparage the new staff of The Black Keys (although to them I say, "Less Beatles, more Burrito!"), the very expansive dream action of Sunburned Hand Of The Man, or the speaker-soaked hits of Youth, Sonic. But you know that stuff already.

On the smaller outside stage probably the weirdest thing the first day was Ron Kray's set, which reminded me of a Sally Eaton concert performed by a manorite — equally opaque scenarios of trench song-lengthing, which was simultaneously hypnotic and squirm-inducing. But DGS also looked really ass as people began to wander into the place and Christine Porter's half-walk thing was as charming as T-Mobiel Ford's electro-ranch-blues thing was basic, yet filigree.

There was not sweet shit happening in the

theatre too, but usually it was only possible to jam a head in the backdoor to assay the scene, because the line in the front was so long. Still, Residual Echoes sounded almost as spasmoid as The Magic Markets although not as Krut as Circle or as glissening as Six Digits Of Admittance, who were a lot damn than Merbow, who shedded tape from here to Meritaka. What a wonderful mix of stuff.

The second day the theatre was even harder to get into, especially when Earth, Growing and Sun(11) were playing back to back. But the margins flow of these were was only really shattered by the sometimes erratic sound system and the onstage appearance of poet Charles Pettis, who was blown physically across the stage by wind from the speakers.

Outside on the small stage, the best set may have been by guitarist Jack Rose, whose fingerpicking technique has really become astounding. But the kids seemed to especially dig back to back sets featuring Deviants Benhart, first as a member of Webster's commune with moon unit, then as the leader of his new group, Harry Fark, who rolled out in a mid-period Tim Rose sort of way. What have imagined such a thing? Not Chae Marshall, who kept her beer and piano and apologies slithering in rhythm, like a true acolyte of Michael Hurley.

The Monday bag stage featured stuff like a reformed Otis Tamer Control (who still seem to understand the dynamics of pop people construction as well as anyone) and Corsets On

Fire (who have become as flagrantly out the top as Staceweds). But most people were waiting for Yo!o Ono to show up and explain exactly how they were supposed to use those little flashlights with her name on them.

Last time I actually saw Ono was a great spot she did some 35 years ago. In the meantime, I once wanted to see if she would call on the phone that was installed at her retrospective art show a few years ago in NYC. But she did not ring. So I had been a long time to hear her voice at her. And it was hot. She cut her way out of some cloth and a bag. She showed us how to use those flashlights to beam our support. And she even sang "Don't Worry, Kyoiko." Her group was actually better sounding than I had dared hope, and the material she played also learned much further away from the Gelfin era than expected. She was a cool as Meme Cunningham and was even tagged in a style that was not unlike something Meme might have worn, so many of us were just about as happy as clams.

And really, what damn would be happy with such a pan-generational display of tests? But the more I think about the outdoor walk acts that played (Yoking Smogs, Winger Flowers, Lowland Diamond, Mantisia Noddy, Brightblack Morning Light), the more I start to think that they were really at the heart of the event. There was a peaceful hippie vibe glazing the contours of the whole hill, even when Slater-Kinney was holding out their all-new jeans. So be it that means I'm a goddamn hippie, well, so are I. ☐

WOODEN OCTOPUS SKULL EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC (P)FESTIVAL SEATTLE VARIOUS VENUES USA

BY CHRYSTOPHER DELAURENT

Spawning across four days, four venues, six continents and 32 performances, the Wooden Octopus Skull Experimental Music (P)Festival commenced an unusual Seattle tradition of scuzzy, subterranean DIY gigs of adventurous music. Indeed, little literary meads anyone willing to estimate the untold history of now forgotten Seattle-based organizations and artist collectives of the 1960s, '70s and early '80s, such as New Directions in Music and/or Soundcheck Northwest, and NEMUS Recent efforts, including The Five Walking And Decomposition Seminar (1995), electroacoustic (as designated by this writer in 1997 and 1999) and the annual Seattle Festival Of Improved Music (1995-present), affirm that a mid-sized city chiefly known as the birthplace of grunge also harbors listeners interested in the new and unusual.

The festival started at the Sunset Tower with Blackhumor, who stood behind the mixer to play a short test record piece of burbling voices that

permeated from speaker to speaker much like Steve Reich's *Contra Alt*. Respectably, this was the only piece of tape music heard during the entire festival. Following and bouncing on stage, Anti-Ear's set was scattered, but much of his dawning sonic palette — the avalanche of samples sped up like the crisp shivers of a rattlesnake, electronic burlesque slithering like antique data stored on tape reels and distorting cowering synthy tones — was quite appealing. Keeping their backs to the audience, Noggin, a duo of amplified violin and electric guitar, hurled through a ferocious feedback ledon piece as if Thurston Moore had transcribed a string quartet by New Complexity Harcochord Brian Ferryhough. Clocking in at under ten minutes, Noggin's incense soon suppressed anticipated performance from Metalux (think Björk meets Merbow) and The Portland Ice Ensemble, who, as their whirraline noise experiments, applied contact microphones to spinning bicycle wheels.

Friday was the best night of the festival. Along with stage monitors aimed at the audience, two PA systems sporting side by side at the Reiser made warbling mandarin. Against a backdrop of surging industrial machinery and reputed recordings of experts discussing

biological hazards, Basillea drenched a gipsy mask and doused the crowd with white powder and vials of liquid. Aka, Gemet's set of fog, smoke, slowed down voices and staggered choruses of distortion stopped suddenly due to some blown fuses. Someone immediately shouted, "No just blasted my lading soul!" I find Basillea staked a senous claim to be self-proclaimed title of "Greatest Living American Noise Artist." Champing on contact microphones while a turntable ground out gears of noise, Basillea premed in his underparts, rubbed a content mixed tone in against his head and was deservingly mobbed after offering live CDs.

The Haters, clad in menacing black leather hoods, played a single instrument, a Newcomb Solid State record player that speeded colorfully loud broadband pulses that eventually coalesced into a queas rumba groove. The Haters provoked the most intense physiological response — the room felt like a noisily depressing aryanic cabin. John Weiss (pronounced "weese"), though "weese" would be an apt, albeit incorrect (pronounced) name, played a stunningly airy microphone, pencil-thin wire wires whisked from the atmosphere and low tones that palpitated this writer's aorta.

On Saturday, the much anticipated Canizer dazed the crowd with garish fluorescent costumes reminiscent of tourist trap Tjarna. Their well-executed thrum bass was fun, but had nothing to do with experimental music. The earlier acts were more adventurous. With two contact mic cables drooping off of his mouth like vampire's fangs stretched and tethered to a mixer, Azen Dikwayi directed sniffing huffs and fussed out, whirring feedback in an arresting set. Then Dikwayi massed the mixer for Smegma, who veered from surf rock to a feast of horns, bells, and trumpet whistles. This venerable spot also wins the palm for most unusual instrument, a heavy duty latex dental dam.

After days of mega-loud sound, the Sunday set of guitar soloist Bill Horst's clear and spiky plucks/thrums was a welcome change. Camped inside a booth at the Furhouse, Climax Golden Twins, equipped with broken guitars, a straw hat and ancient sacrament gear, matched Horst's trumpet set with a violent agglomeration of grinding feedback, tambourine jangles and children's whistles. The festival concluded at the Baltic Room, not with a bang but with a comfortably atmospheric DJ set from Nurse With Wound mastermind Steven Seaport. ☐

On Location

EMOTIONAL ORCHESTRA LONDON TATE MODERN

UK

BY LOUISE GRAY

For anyone unsure as to who, or exactly what, an Emotional Orchestra was, there was an attendant on hand from Tate Modern among the people gathering on the steps of the Turbine Hall. "It's a concert by ladies," he said. And indeed it was that, among other things. Marina Rosenfeld, the Brooklyn-based instigator behind the orchestra, is an artist whose work—a practice that presents itself through both a visual and a sonic output—is, in a larger sense of the word, performance-driven. The Emotional Orchestra for 36 stringed and other bowable instruments is, in Rosenfeld's terms, a temporary entity of some 36 women, the vast majority of whom had never, until they entered a rehearsal workshop 36 hours before the concert, before they touched a harp, viola, cello or guitar.

If this prospect conjures up a brief vision of the anti-élite peloties that drove Cornelius Cardew's Scottish Orchestras in the 60s, or even the spectacle of Fabrice Audouard and John Russell's work for 20 tasteless women playing the drums (and they were) at the South London Gallery in 2002, the reality is quite different. The half-hour work that Rosenfeld's electroacoustic orchestra delivered up was surprisingly taut and percussive, its sounds merging well with the ambient hum—in G sharp, by the way, the orchestra tuned to it—of the venue's massive Turbine Hall. The thrust of Rosenfeld's work comes less from the type of evolutionary theory of Cardew than a feminist impulse to create a body of women and make it audible. This is all done with some good humor; Rosenfeld is an old hand when it comes to orchestras. In 1994, she founded The Sheer Foot Orchestra for 17 women on guitars and real warth bores, which, in 2003, the

Emotional Orchestra—which made its debut with a bunch of other musicians at the Manhattan gallery, Oetli Projects—was so named to highlight both the procedure behind their working method and to hint at hoary old chestnuts about heterosexual women and the like.

So, it was apt then, that Tate Modern's concert marked the debut of a series of gallery events organized by Her Noise, a curatorial duo that focuses on women's work in sonic art. The real coup of the event was that this distributed work Rosenfeld considered the new phase of the orchestra. The players had loaned their parts from following a huge graphic score that was projected on a video screen before them. There, superimposed on a picture of a lyre (arrows on a postcard, please, as to the significance of this floral choice), were vertical lines. Wide strips signified longer, slower bow movements, narrower strips called for shorter, faster movements. As the players were not

stepping down strings on the necks of their instruments, this meant that the orchestra's sound was basically rhythmic, and this was enhanced by various other instructions on the score. For example, a 'b' signified that players were to bow the bow, an 'f' to pluck the fingers on bridge and neck, and a 'w' to use the bow's wooden side. The more complex manœuvres and solos were taken on by the more experienced players present.

With several of the orchestra members wearing glittery skewers, similar to those worn in fencing bouts, there was a strong visual sense of movement. And similarly so to the coarsely changing information on the video screen. But in making her score manifest, Rosenfeld's intentions go beyond that of the concert itself. By producing a statement about often inaccessible information, as well as creating a new notational system, there was something much more subversive suggested. □

OSAKA EYE/BLIND BEAST YAMAKA CLUB QUATRO

JAPAN

BY JONNY DAVIES

At Osaka's seventh floor Club Quattro, where tremors and quakes have been known to disturb performances, any seismic activity was rendered ineffectual as members of Boredoms and Sonic Youth powerfully commemorated Time Bomb Records' 15th anniversary. (In fact, this Osaka concert was the second of a two-city celebration: the first had taken place at Club Quattro's Tokyo space a couple of nights beforehand.)

First to the stage, Boredoms' Yamakata Eye, a dignitary of Osaka's Noise mystify focused on an invisible pulse in the mid-distance. Billed for this event as Weyew, Eye knows how to build

anticipation. Exhaling all traditional instruments, he used a pair of wet controllers, resembling 100 watt bulbs, in conjunction with a rack of motion sensors to play out a single 20 minute burst of energy that recalled the most frenetic parts of Boredoms' Super-E album. Eye appeared with only these aids in his hands, then dived and aimed blows with a boxer's fluency. His entire solo set consisted of choreographed movement, electronically sensed and translated into an ever-changing palette of noise. At various moments, he would produce a shattering blow into a boxing ring (mimicry) dangled from the grating above) for dramatic punctuation.

At its climax, Eye's performance left a sense of anticipation coupled with slow-burning bliss. Certainly, a tough act to follow, but a more than

capable outfit was on hand to assume the duty.

Blind Beast, a nascent trio comprising Boredoms' Yohann P-Wu with Sonic Youth's Jim O'Rourke and Thurston Moore, made a remarkably noteworthy journey. P-Wu shined piercing screams in a new language, played an array of small pieces and hit times, h-hats and cymbals; Moore provided guitar-driven feedback and spine; O'Rourke masterfully modulated everything—the captain of the vessel.

The trio entered the crowd with a set of elaborately twined drums, augmented with Yohann's uniquely low-level vocal style. The density of Blind Beast's sound was built slowly and amplified until O'Rourke began subtly to unwind things, leaving huge beautiful spaces in the music, into which quiet chimes and articulated echoes began to appear. After this

flaming comelodone, Moore and P-Wu played feedback and percussion against each other, accelerating a return to intense atmosphere. A dash of melody during the final passage, unexpected and shocking, almost brought the journey to a crashing halt, but it was Moore's merciless assaults on his guitar that provided Blind Beast's salvation.

O'Rourke's most infelicitous instrumental contribution was preceded by a ringing attitude, who was for some time slowing a harmonica (in the embrace of instant listeners), apparently aware that O'Rourke himself would finally produce his own model from a jacket pocket. His harmonica, played gently and with its head edges removed in the mix, provided the soft landing pads for Blind Beast's memorable arrival. □

PAUL DUNMALL TRIO LONDON JACKSONS LANE

UK

BY PHILIP CLARK

With saxophonist Paul Dunmall convalescing from the effects of a brain aneurysm and Paul Rogers' truly seven-string bass also recovering from a bashing, only drummer Tony Bianco made it to this gig without some evidence of physical trauma. Jacksons Lane has been housing improvised music gigs since the start of 2003. If mention that the venue sits only a few minutes' walk from Highbury tube on the Archway Road in North London, you'd be right to suspect that Sound 323's Mark Wastell is the perimeter and good on Wastell for presenting a trio lag on creativity, but short on opportunities to display it.

Because there are three musicians, a categorization as a trio is inevitable, although some of the most revealing moments in the set occurred around three-way interplay. An epic drum solo allowed its way to the front, Rogers and Dunmall answered Bianco's final cymbal crash as a single unit with lesser invention that demonstrated an elevated level of shared purpose and direction. Bianco is a splashy drummer, big on rhetorical gesture and the sort of looped grooves that one as flattened they transform themselves into all-purpose underbody. With equilibrium perched on a wire, it felt like Dunmall and Rogers sometimes needed escape from Bianco's full-on insistence. Certainly it made for an intriguing imbalance within the group, honestly played out.

When saxophone and bass chose to ride Bianco's driving contours they did so with menacing physical conviction and redolent resourcefulness. Dunmall—whose shoulder condition kept his number two instrument, a set of baggies, in their case—played tenor saxophone throughout and the warmth of his playing, both tonally and spiritually, was uplifting. The home straight of the trio's long improvisation marched forward with tremendous lift, and Dunmall jammed himself into an ecstatic groove: casually evocative of merlot hooks from South African jazz. He set out-of-body screams on from the howling howls of his instrument to beyond the beyond of the tenor saxophone. Mere playing was transcended as Dunmall massaged noise itself.

The so-called WLL bass that Paul Rogers uses is really curved like a violin and is essentially a bass extended to encompass the upper range of the cello. It's a device to describe bass playing as 'woody', but Rogers's tone has clarity that's closer to the purity of water. With his seven-string instrument out of action, Rogers relied on his six-string cousin, and his resonant and charismatic sound is bass playing like I've never heard before. Strummed guitar-to-tom figures are given a flick of the wrist to turn into Muddy Waters-like string bends, a circular motion like a cascading drill bit creates feral clusters and hairy protrusions, beeping in the low register below thunderously. Dunmall let out an audible sigh when all was done, it was quite a journey. □



Clockwise from top left: Matsuo Rosenthal's Emotional Orchestra, Blind Beast in Tokyo, Goodopal and Jason Ferret in Stavanger

NUMUSIC FESTIVAL STAVANGER VARIOUS VENUES

BY SUSANNA GLASER

Being itself as Scandinavia's largest festival devoted to the advancement of electronic music, Numusic, held in the country's west coast town of Stavanger, sets its sights high. Now in its fifth year, the organizers achieved a major coup in securing Karlheinz Stockhausen for a three-day live exposé of his electronic works, old and new. A mix of artists ranging from Norway's biggest elektronika export Biosphere, to Berlin's loathe Cobra Killers, left most festival-goers reeling with sensory overload on each of the five nights of entertainment.

Biosphere opened the festival at Stavanger's packed cathedral. With the rain drumming relentlessly outside and the wind picking up to boot, the effect was bleaker than Gor Jensen could ever have hoped for. The majestic interior, ideally lit up in muted blue (the lights would later be dimmed to complete darkness), was solemn as he set about layering loops of found sound. At times emotion was bypassed in favor of a metallic rendition of his work, but the cathedral provided a stunning setting for Biosphere's hypnotic Ambient constructions. Stockhausen's works were presented down the road from the main New Scene venue, at Skarsten vorhausse, where the hangar-like

interior was cordoned off by black curtains, enclosing the audience made a cocoon. Here Stockhausen introduced his works before reducing the lights to darkness, apart from a faint guiding "moon". The effect of this darkness was mesmerizing. Time lost its meaning, ten minute pieces taking years, hour-long performances feeling like ten minutes. Pity then, that exorbitantly uncomfortable chairs prevented complete absorption into the music.

His *Gesang Der Aengstlichen* from 1956 cannot have lost its impact in the intervening 50 years, its bubbles of boyish vocals flying eerily through the air above us. Nonetheless, a darker after, featuring all the 1950s sci-fi film effects you've seen heard, zig-zagged menacingly across our heads. Octaphase was especially effective in the darkness, Stockhausen exhorted us to "replay the tape". Without visuals, the sound sculpted itself into the atmosphere, shimmering, settling, swelling, rising and spinning overhead, moving from speaker to speaker imperceptibly. By the fade out at the end, the silence was literally pressing on our eardrums.

The more recent work, *Mittheits Guss* ("Wednesday Greeting") from 1968, featured further explorations in his layering technique, cumulative chords changing timbre from harsh metallic noise to thick woolly sounds, sometimes feathered, or rounded, always mystic and farreal.

USA/USA's flute and laptop combo was illuminating — Bjørnar Habbestad's flute manipulated and layered through effects while Jeff Carney added texture and flow to the performance. Rob's baritone sax, used and abused, led us from broken dance rhythms to quiet contemplation without a judder. Tussle's hard-as-nails triple drumkit plus laptop broke the air around us with daggers of rhythm, while Germany's Qwertzblaster Ensemble entranced with eight yellow capped performers with purple ghostblasters playing one part each of an abstract composition.

French-Japanese sessions, *serives_sights* (accompanied with music and visuals triggered by hand movements, conjuring art out of thin air. Then there was the heavily bearded Goodopal — whistling throughout his set — whose utterly transcending homemade musical contraptions and decidedly eccentric set-up, featuring a table filled with strange models of planets and a glass-capped metallic bird, had the whole audience capt. Not knowing whether to laugh or cry at the unconventional beauty of his astonishing performance.

Exploding Plastic also provided a riveting highlight. A live drummer and spontaneous digital inventory made for an exploration of sound beyond that expected of any Techno outfit, creating an atmosphere capable of lulling, stirring, and dancing. And

artists such as The N-Collective (fig. Band, smashing the sonic barrier by placing the audience in between two sets of bass-drummers and the gentle euphony-led beauty of Matthias Engler's rendition of Kaga Saitoh's *Six Japanese Gardens* for Percussion And Electronics further demonstrated the variety of music on offer. The outrageously drunk Cobra Killers, who, not content with imbibing whole bottles of wine on stage, decided to pour extra bottles over themselves, gained a mixed reaction, but their sexy, surreal chaos was decidedly entertaining. The manic Jason Forst/Donna Summer's show was a glorious headbanging mess. And a deliciously happy Jamie Lufkin, dressed in a silver lamé dancing gown, rocked out as much as the audience, who were dancing pore-close to his presence.

Being at once an intimate, close-knit festival, despite the calibre of international artists, the overriding impression here was one of warmth and of communion. Each of the artists was encouraged to get as close to the audience as possible and vice versa. Without the artificial divide between audience and performer, the artists thrived, while the audience couldn't help but feel themselves drawn into the music, whether presented by an artist they'd sought out or somebody they'd never heard of and, perhaps, chanted upon in passing. □

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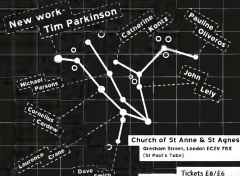
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Rahel Tarral makes Atlantic Waves (left), Kaithe Matthews makes Her Noise



UK festivals

ATLANTIC WAVES

LONDON
Annual Anglo-Portuguese festival comprising intriguing new collaborations across a wide variety of genres. Many of the artists can be sampled on the subscriber-only CD that comes with this issue of *The Wire*. Whynum, Dead Combo with Joe Black, The Legendary Tiger Man vs Billy Jenkins (London Spitz, 23 November); The G.R. Fat Freddy, Ana da Silva (London Spitz, 24); Torne with Amílcar Rodrigues, Simon Fisher Turner with Vitor Joaquim & Lu, Ale Orde/Adriana Sá/Hugo Barbosa (London The Spitz, 28); Sig Meisgal Quamel with Joe Morris, Manuel Mota/Dikkyung Lee/Ioshio Kajiwara/Tim Barnes, Ernesto Rodrigues/Guilherme Rodrigues/Arghad Dawes/Masakuni Ezaki/Alexander Basset (London Spitz, 29); Rafael Toni/Oren Marshall/César Burgio, Margarida Garcia/John Tibary/Eddie Prevost/Benny Weisblatt, Carlos Bocanegra/Jolito Lisandro (London Spitz, 30). London venue venues times and prices, 22-30 November: www.atlanticwaves.org.uk

HUDDESFIELD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL

HUDDESFIELD
Yokesh's handy hardcore contemporary music event celebrates its 30th birthday this year with Christopher Fox, Smith Quartet, Ives Ensemble, Janek Schaeffer, James Dillon, Stearnsbeat Switzerland/Sam Hayden, Michael Finnissy, Chris Dench, Mehdi Lardjani, Giacomo Scelsi, Jo Nando and The Freiburg Baroque Orchestra. Huddersfield venue venues, times and prices, 17-27 November: 01484 430526, www.hcmf.co.uk

LONDON JAZZ FESTIVAL

LONDON
This year's highlights include Italian Instabile Orchestra (Purcell Room, 12 November), McCoy Tyner Trio and World Saxophone Quartet (Barbican, 15), Bill Fissell and Tin Hat Trio (Barbican, 15), Big Air featuring Oren Marshall, Myra Melford and Jim Black (Purcell Room, 16), Uri Caine and John Surman (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 20), London venue venues, times and prices, 11-20 November, www.seisou.org.uk

LONDON JAZZ FESTIVAL AT THE SPITZ

LONDON
A clutch of interesting bills at the East End venue as part of the LF umbrella. Philip Clemons presents his film and music project Separated By Shadows plus Wubbut and Oren Marshall (11 November); Robotoblock from Poland, Terry Edwards, Morhanna (12); Toob (a-Road Snappers), Sam Rockford's Fabarm Jawsman, The Fabrics (13); Norwegian jazz quartet Gerd Amset, Miso Soup, Polifix (15); Polar Bear, Bustronic featuring Joe Bell (15); jazz power trio Cowling, Lucha Libre (16); Rennie Radio, Zinn, David Hoshen/Myrta Bird Sing (20). London Spitz, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz.co.uk

LMC'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC

LONDON
This year the Impressionist-heavy festival takes the form of five evening concerts. Tickets are free but availability is strictly limited, so book in advance. Each night features a performance of a new work by Rhodri Davies and his ensemble Common Object. The full line up is: AWM with David Ardman, Ivan Sent, Louisa Martin, Common Object (1 November), Richard Chartier, Goss/Dattina/Figges, Common Object (2), Steve Beresford, Ivo Savan, Dieb 13, Common Object

(3), Xavier Charles, Louise Martin, Teha Mukaji, Common Object (4), John Tibary, Maxen Kerbas, Maffin, Common Object (5). London Bidwell Theatre, free, but reserve in advance by emailing info@lmcldh.demon.co.uk, www.l-m-c.org.uk

TERMITES CLUB FESTIVAL

LEEDS
Long running Leeds Improv, free folk, out rock and noise festival over three nights. The full line up is: Fohn Baldri, Sudden Infant, Seillon B. Adjective 1.1, Suite 35 (Leeds Fenton, 24 November); Sharon Keun & Alex K Rodham and guests, Alan Tomlinson, Furiosa, Endliche Curious Voice Duo (Leeds Fenton, 25); The Royal Sogor featuring Tom Jenkinson, Mick Beck and Paul Hession plus Paul Damsell, Steamboat Switzerland, Alessandro Basset, 5*MEG/DMT (Leeds Brudenell, 26). Leeds Fenton and Brudenell, 24-26 November, 7.30pm, www.termites.co.uk/termites

International festivals

AVANTO FESTIVAL

FINLAND
Live performances from Bija Baggild, Jondek, Boi, Awa Noto, Sleepspeak Soundsystem, Vainiolit Lulu, Sudden Infant, Hitz, Hitz Not Karl, Teikide Hazard, Vinko Ja Sahina, 3 Stereo and Poskan Savat. Plus a programme of related films, videos and installations. There is also, for the first time, a strand of programming aimed specifically at children. Helsinki venue venues, 18-20 November, 62 euros festival pass, www.avantofestival.com

NOVEMBER MUSIC

NETHERLANDS/BELGIUM/GERMANY
New music festival that takes place in three

countries and presents Mauricio Kagel, Canan Nodari, Zeikvor, Arto Lindsay, Arto Quartet, Jacy Polinola and many more. V-Hertogenbosch, Gent, Bochum, Dortmund, Essen and Hesse venue venues, times and prices, 15-20 November, 00 31 73 8122000, www.novembermusic.net

ROULETTE AT LOCATION ONE

USA
A week of evening concerts by a range of leading experimental music practitioners. Daniel Carter & Matt Weiss, NKA (7 November), Zelig McMillen, MN Carbox (8), Maynard Amacher, Stefan Tcherepin (9), Dave Williams, Tony Beck (10), Julia Heyward (11), LaDonna Smith, John Basset & Burkhard Berns (12) and Peter Evans, Glenda Goodman, Vutrophone (13). New York Location One, 8.30pm, \$15-fee, 001 212 219 8242, www.rolette.org

TAMPERE JAZZ HAPPENING

FINLAND
International jazz festival with Orkestra Black Afro, World Peace Orchestra, EST, Yelkibe Brothers, Carl Acta Dato Band, Steve Watts & Jamie Hane, Gohard Ullmann's Basement, Research Quartet, Peter Brötzmann/Manno Plakias/Michael Wertels/RTU, Amsterdam String Trio and Tamasz Szabo Quartet. Tampere venue venues, 3-6 November, 00 358 3 62071 66751, www.tampere.fi/teho/music

TOTAL MUSIC MEETING

GERMANY
Celebrated improvisation festival with Ivo Wing Vng featuring Berne Phillips, Furt & Even Parker, Org, John Blitcher & Gino Robak, Mohammed Ross Mortzen, Wolfgang Fischer/Joel Dornier/Thomas Loh/Dr. Hille, John Buzcher/Luke Elias/Fabrizio Spere and Walecia Leo Smith/Bern Phillips/Günter Sommer. There are also

workshops, a premiere of a documentary about Cecil Taylor entitled *All The Notes* and an audiovisual installation by LUST/LOOS Berlin. Berlinische Galerie, 3-6 November, festival pass £20-80 euros, 00 49 30 7890 2600, www.berlinschlagere.de, www.music-production.de

TWO MILLION TONGUES FESTIVAL USA

Five folk, noise, protestation, viola double and five guitar, joining Vito Corvo, Hottotogisu, Minniepota, Mountains (3), Jackie O Motherfucker, Pearls & Brass, Jack Rose (4), Whitehouse, Josephine Foster, Andrew Ostriner, Heptac (5), Charlie Nothing, Michael Chapman, No Neck Blues Band, Ed Asner (6), Chicago The Empty Bottle, 3-6 November, 3pm, \$15-\$12, 001 773 276 3600, www.emptybottle.com

Special events

JUSTIN BENNETT: NOISE MAP

NETHERLANDS
Retrospective exhibition of works by sound artist Bennett. Contents include *Bent Story*, which combines location recordings with local radio and slides; *Crystal Radio* comprising a series of sound emitting glass bowls; *Soundhouse*, a sound sculpture which creates listening posts from PVC tubing with funnels; and a new work which condenses the sounds of life from over a 24 hour period. The Hague Gem Museum-Voor Actuele Kunst, to 27 November, Tues-Sat, noon-6pm, 00 31 70 338 1133, www.gen-online.com

CHRONIC EPOCH UK

A ten week exhibition celebrating the Seasonal/ed exhibition and performance space's tenth anniversary, featuring artists they've worked with over the years including David Cunningham, Bruce Gilbert, Hayley Newman and Tracey Emin among others. The exhibition includes painting, film, performance and sculpture. London Seasonal/ed, to 20

November, Wed-Sat, noon-6pm, 020 7582 6465, www.beaconfield.itd.uk

FRITICES: READER-NOTON

BELGIUM
Carsten Nicolai presents installations at the SWAK museum for contemporary art and there is a series of performances featuring CM Von Hausdorff and Serkay (13 November); Frank Bredtchendorf aka Khorst, Bytchka, Alex Neta, Sigal (12); Robert Uspok, Paul, Jike aka and, CDH (25), Ghent Vooruit and SWAK, 11-25 November, 00 32 2267 2889, www.uorub.be

HER NOISE UK

UK
Exhibition put together by Electra, the production house run by the Wife's Anne Hilde Neel and Lisa Dowerice Russell, which features new soundworks and interactive installations by Kim Gordon & Julia Kuehn, Emma Hodgson, Christina Kuschak, Kalle Matthews, Hayley Newman and Marina Rosenthal. London Gallery, 18 November-18 December, Tue-Sat, noon-6pm, 020 7703 9799, www.henrose.com, www.southlondonartgallery.org

RYOJI IKEDA & HIROSHI SUGIMOTO: THE END OF TIME JAPAN

Ikeda creates a sound installation to accompany a series of seascapes as part of a major retrospective of work by Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto. Tokyo Mori Art Museum, to 9 January, www.mori-art-museum.com

CHARLES LINEHAN COMPANY: NEW QUARTET/HAPPY DAYS UK

Two dance pieces by the acclaimed UK choreographer as part of this year's Dance Umbrella programme. *Happy Days* is inspired by and uses as its soundtrack Jim O'Rourke's piece of the same name, a monumental dance work for guitar and lumpy guitar. London The Place Room Howard Dance Theatre, 5-6 November, 8pm, 11-25-ES, 020 7387 0031, www.danceumbrella.co.uk

PLAYING JOHN CAGE UK

An exhibition of new installations focusing on the legacy of John Cage, put together by David Top. Featured artists include Kaffe Matthews, Alex Curran, Michael Penn, Alex Suzuki, Rolf Aulus, Carsten Nicolai, Takag Masakatsu and Ryoji Ikeda. One of Cage's *Aycoyo* drawings will be on display and there will also be four new audio installations of lost pieces by Gavin Bryars, Christer Wolf, Michael Parsons and Mako Shiori that can be accessed on shuffle play. The main exhibition is partnered by a second exhibition that runs simultaneously upstairs, and which focuses on the Black Mountain College and the artists that were regulars there, including Robert Rauschenberg, Willem de Kooning and Buckminster Fuller. Beal Art Foundation, 5 November-15 January 2006, Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm, free, 0117 917 2300, www.artforum.org.uk

SAVAGE PENCIL: ARTFANG UK

UK
The Miro's long-serving cartoonist and illustrator exhibits original works and prints. His distinctive style uses 'Black Metal' gothic script, semen, blood and ink as both media and inspiration. London Introspe, to 1 November, Mon-Sat 10:00am-6:00pm, Sunday noon-5pm, free, 020 7229 8010, www.introspe.co.uk/art.htm

SOUNDS LIKE DRAWING UK

UK
Exhibition exploring the link between sound and drawing is works by Kaffe Matthews, Carsten Nicolai, Steve Rodles, Beth Corbitt and Connor Kelly, and others. London Drawing Room, to 20 November, Thurs-Sat, noon-6pm, 020 7729 5333, www.drawingroom.org.uk

SYNAESTHESIA: MODERN MULTIMEDIA USA

Crossmedia happening involving performance, film and music from the polyhistoric Impression Bay Area collective The Wily Because, in app (art), which includes a rare live appearance by Nurse With Wound's Steven Stapleton plus

members of Shilappagee and The Helen Seaton Agency; visual artist Gales, and gender-bending cabaret from Troops. Oakland CA 21 Grand Gallery, 6 November, www.21grand.org

WEATHER GUITAR UK

A new sound installation by Simon Blackburn whereby a nylon string flamenco acoustic guitar is attached to an elaborate construction allowing it to be played by changes in the wind speed and direction, and changes in light conditions. Birmingham Lion Gallery to 13 November, Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm, free, 0121 248 0708, www.lion-gal.org.uk

On stage

A HAWK & A HACKSAW

POLYSTYRENE multi-instrumentalist Jeremy Barnes on the road. Dublin Wheelans (25 October), London Bush Hall (27), Bristol Third Arts Centre (28), Leeds Holy Trinity Church (31), Edinburgh Subway Caverns (1 November), Aberdeen Tunnels (2), Glasgow Bbc (3), Hull Adelphi (4), Manchester King's Arms (7), Sheffield Grapes (6), Leicester Park Nova (7), London Spitz (8), Ovis (for Koch (10), Liverpool View Two Gallery (11), Newcastle Morton Tower (12), Nottingham Cabaret (13), Coventry Ten Angel (14), Cambridge Portland Arms (15), Brighton Ballrooms (16). www.brokenheartfestival.org.uk/hawk

AKRON/FAMILY

Young Dads Records combo combining all folk with extended sonic improv. London 53 Feet East (15 November), Cardiff Buffalo Bar (16), Bristol Cafe Cinema (17), www.youngdadsrecords.com

ANTONY AND THE JOHNSONS

Mercury Music Prize winners tour with their dramatic vocal stylings. Wolshehampton Civic Hall (22 November), York Open House (23), Dublin Vicar Street (25), Glasgow Academy (30), Bristol Cabaret (22 December), Cardiff Sander (21), Tamworth's Parties (4), London Shephards Bush Empire (5 & 6), www.antonysandthejohnsons.com

Trip Or Squeek



Out There



The Young Gods (left) and Four Tet on tour

BIG AIR

Steve Buckley and Chris Batchelor's jazz quartet, with Myra Melford, Oren Marshall and Jim Black, London Jazz Festival (16 November), Leeds Warehouse (17), Cambridge Box (18)

PHILIP CLARK: ALL THE RAGE UK

A concert exploring themes of text and music, featuring the premiere of *All The Rage* by composer and librettist Philip Clark. The programme includes pieces by Hanns Eisler, Mike Westbrook and Richard Barrett, played by Ian Pace (piano), Carl Rosman (claret), Alex Ward (clarinet, guitar) and Kate Westbrook (violin), London The Warehouse, 10 November, 7.30pm, £10-67, www.thewarehouse.co.uk

PHILIP CLEMO'S SEPARATED BY SHADOWS

Film and live music collaboration with a first class band featuring The Wire's own Clive Bell, John Edwards, Tom Chant, Mark Sanders and Pete Lockett, Manchester Life Café (5 November), London The Splitz (11), Exeter Phoenix (13), Norwich Arts Centre (14), www.philipcleo.com

RHOIDS OVIES

Music for solo trio by Pauline Oliveros, Cornelius Cardew, Michael Parsons, Tim Parkinson, Catherine Kantz, John Lucy, Lawrence Crane and Dave Smith, London Church of St Anne & St Agnes, 23 November, 7.30pm, £8/£5, www.rhoidsovia.com

FAUST

Aberdeen has been added to this mini-tour by the Krautrock superstars. Sanger Hendrix Hall (27 October), Aberdeen The Tunnels (28), Cardiff Cof Decharge (31), www.arknet.net, www.arknet.co.uk

FOUR TET

Kevin Hudson takes his kaleidoscopic sampledelia on the road supported by Explosions in the Sky (28 October 10 November) and Kid Koala (10-15 November), Hastings Harpers (22 October), Cambridge Soul Tent (23), Easter Cavern Club (26), Cardiff Port (27), Bristol Trinity Arts Centre (28), Oxford Zodiac (29), Reading South Street (30), Sheffield Plug (31), Manchester Mnt Lounge (5 November), Leeds Brunel Club (12), Gateshead Sals (13), Edinburgh Laid Rooms (4), Glasgow ABC (5), Brighton Concorde 2 (7), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (8), Whitman Central Station (9), London Hammsmith Palace (10), Dublin Temple Bar (12), Belfast Spring & Airwave (13), Galway Rosca Dula (14), Cork Club One (15), www.fourtet.net, www.enjoyourwines.com

BILL FRISSELL

New York guitarist plays two dates, Edinburgh Usher Hall (31 October), London Barbican (15 November), www.bfrissell.co.uk

PURSAXA

Sublime, ethereal free folk from West Philly, Cambridge C82, 28 November, £6-55, 01223 300087, www.harvest-of-the-woods.org.uk

HOLLY GLOUGHTLY

Good as gold as Headcoatee beangs her way around the country, York Barfly (3 November), Liverpool Barfly (4), Glasgow Barfly (5), Cardiff Barfly (11), London Barfly (12)

GRUTRONIC

Improvised ensemble and guests, London Spic with Clive Bell (18 November), Tugmush Carleton with Owen Parker (20)

AREV HENRIKSEN

Debut UK performance for Norwegian trumpeter's trio with Audun Nieve and Jan Bang, Southampton Turner Sims Concert Hall, 29 November, 8pm, £15-58, 023 8059 5151, www.turnersims.co.uk

ITALIAN INSTABLE ORCHESTRA

The Italian jazz big band celebrates their 19th anniversary with a Contemporary Music Network tour. The group are joined by Leeds-based composer and master Matthew Bourne for a specially commissioned collaboration, Leeds Warehouse (7 November), Basingstoke Anvil (9), Manchester RNCM (10), Oxford Wesley Memorial Church (11), London Purcell Room (12), www.italianso.com, www.italianstableorchestra.com

JAMIE LIOELL

Cyber-soul stylings from the recent Wire cover star, London Sals with Genovese and Mocky (2 November), Sheffield Plug (3), Gateshead Sage (4), Liverpool Mosque Theatre (5), Brighton Concorde 2 with Jackson And His Computer Band (5), www.waveproceeds.com

LONDON IMPROVISERS' ORCHESTRA

Monthly concert by an all-star improvising big band combining contributions, improvisations and new compositions, London Red Rose Club, 6 November, 8pm, £5/£3, 020 7732 0222

OREN MARSHALL

Solo and collaborative gigs from the tube and electronics whizz (see page 16), London Sals solo supporting Punks Walk (31 October), London Sals solo (11 November), Brighton Jazz Club duo with Jaki Nyabisi (16 December), London Spitz in a trio with Rafael Tobar and César Saura (30), www.slowset.co.uk

STEPHAN MATHIEU & JANEK SCHAEFER

Collaboration between the electroacoustic composer and the triple-am turntable exponent using recordings of John Leaver's collection of classical and exotic instruments as their starting point, York University Rymer Auditorium, 11 November, 7.30pm, £6-£3, 01904 432439, boatfloatyork.ac.uk

MELT BANANA

Furious punk rock from Tokyo, Brighton Pavilion (6 November), Bristol Rance & Fikin with Justice Feldman and Hunting Lodge (6), Birmingham Medicine Bar (9), London Garage (10), Manchester Academy 3 (11), Glasgow Ona Mar (12), Stociton-Ona Georgian Theatre (13), Nottingham Trent University (14), Cardiff Ona Mar Bach (15), Leeds Josephs Wall (18), Hull Adelphi (19), London Garage (20), Southampton Joines with Hunting Lodge and Sig Joar (21), www.meltmusic.co.uk

OVERKILL

All nighter put together by Wrong Music, Littlebig and Adasack and featuring OJ/Rupture, Justice Feldman, OJ South Egg, Shmrat, V/W, Minness, Celi, Trencher, Phil Collins, 3, OJ Four Queens and Live Powerless Passes among many others, London Electricities 6, 4 November 10pm-6am, £10/£12, www.wrongmusic.com

BOX SIX & SAMARA LUBELSKI + LEAP SECONDS

Free folk front-runner Paul Gubler supported by New York underground composer Lubelski and folkweaving drums and bass duo from South London, London Underbelly, 14 November, 8pm, £6, 077922 31122, www.paulgublertrio.co.uk

PLAYING JOHN CAGE

To launch the collection of the same name (see Special Events) starts an afternoon concert featuring Karla Matthews, Alan Davis, Michael Prime and Aleks Saks performing their own work, and Philip Thomas and Anita Lubelski with performing work by Cage, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, Eric Sade and Alan Luster, Bristol Amolika, 5 November, 3pm, 0117 917 2300, www.amolikahouse.org

POLAR BEAR

Drummer Seb Rodford's nu-jazz ensemble, Colchester Arts Centre (6 November), Gateshead Sals (8), Leeds Warehouse (9), Cardiff Cafe Jazz (10)

THE STEVE RED ENSEMBLE

Jazz drummer on tour, The London concert is a collaboration with Four Tet's Ian Hobbes, Cardiff Port (14), Brighton Union (15),

Birmingham Custard Factory (16), Bristol Fiddlers (17), Manchester Music Box (18), Leeds Hi-Fi Club (19), London Luminare with Kevin Hudson/Four Tet (21), www.sauljames.co.uk

PAUL RUTHERFORD

Solo trombone improvisations with support from Psychome Challenge. Performances will be accompanied by live action painting by Peter Oakley and Greg Fuller, Warrington Pyramid Arts Centre, 18 November, 7.30pm, £6, 01925 442345, www.pyramid.org.uk, www.electronicmusic.co.uk

SCANNER & PETE LOCKETT

A new percussive and electronic collaboration also going under the name The Parallel Beat Brothers, Nottingham Arts Theatre (28 October), Oxford Jacqueline Du Pré Music Building (2 November), Brighton Dome (3), Both Spa University College Michael Tippett Centre (4), Exeter Phoenix (5), Coventry Warwick Arts Centre (6)

SLEATER-KINNEY

Portland, Oregon rock trio on fire form and on tour, Brighton Concorde 2 (8), Bristol Fleoce (9), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (10), Glasgow Ona Mar (11), Leeds Cocker (12), www.sleaterkinney.com, www.psychiceds.com

TAURIPS TULA

Impressed punk-psychdelic guitar music featuring Heather Leigh Murray and The Wire's David Keenan, supported by Cambridge's Haven, Cambridge C82, 7 November, 8pm, £5-£4, 01223 300087, www.harvest-time-recording.com

ASSIF TSAHAR

Rare UK date for the US avant jazz saxophonist, Manchester Beer House, 3 November, 8.30pm, £3, 07895 8897075, www.hewitts.com/

UNORTHODOX CHANTS

Contemporary Music Network tour featuring music from Russia that draws on traditional folk forms. The Poleskoy Vocal Ensemble perform traditional wedding songs alongside work by Stevanovic and a new minimalist work by Vladimir Marynow performed with the string ensemble Opus Post. Vocalist and accordionist Evelyn Petrova accompanies the folk. Hazeldenfield Lawrence Bayle Theatre (23 November), London USO St Luke's (25), Manchester RNCM (26), Brighton Old Market (29), Basingstoke Anvil (30), www.unorthodox.co.uk

JUSTICE VLOHAM

Acrobatic sound and performance artist on tour

with his glass, saline and blood show
London Elektrobits (as part of the Overall all-nighter (see above) (4 November), Bristol Club with Melt Banana & Noag (8), Colchester Arts Centre with Infralith (10), London Barbers Bar (11), Brighton bar (13), Leeds Pioneers with Fitty Taid and others (14), Nottingham bar (15), Edinburgh the (16) [djlover.com/justice.html](http://www.djlover.com/justice.html)

THE YOUNG GODS
Celebrating the release of their 20th anniversary retrospective on PIAS London Barfly (25 November), Birmingham Barfly (26), York Fiddlers (27), Glasgow Barfly (28), Dublin Temple Bar Music Centre (30), Liverpool Barfly (1 December), Cardiff Barfly (2), London Barfly (3). www.younggods.com, www.barflyclub.com

ZAUM
Steve Niles's improving gig announces the release of their new album *The Little Flash of Lattice* Go to a handful of live dates: Poole Lighthouse (12), London Spitz (20), Brighton Pavilion Theatre (24)

Club spaces

BACK IN YOUR TOWN
A Spring 1960s music meeting organised by Spring Head Jack's Ashley Wales. This month features a large acoustic ensemble playing improvisations and compositions conducted by Wales. The gig features Tony Bean, Okey Robinson, Stefano Kolesko, Pete Bland, Mark Weller, Angband Davies, Ian Kiffin, Hannah Marshall, Marco Nottas, Brian Nobles, George Foster, David Leahy, Nick Smart and Ian R. Wilson. London Red Room, 17 November; 8.30-11pm. £5/£3. 020 7263 7265

BOAT-TING
Merely Impromptu and poetry night on a boat moored on the Thames with Roger Turner/Alex Wood/Pat Thomas; because featuring Gary Jeff and Lou Cicciotti; female rock trio Wet Dog; and poet Dr Mortuary London Youth Club, 7 November, 8pm, 25-£2.50. www.boat-ting.com

BRISTOL CUBE MICROPLEX
Music events at the West Country's counter-cultural enclave this month include *Deadbeat* live, plus a screening of the *Keep in Time* beats and dekada documentary (4 November), New York free talk from PG Sa (13), Neon/Family and Pico (13), live music and readings from Arthur Brown (18), Charles Hayward and Jiv (25), Bristol Cube Cinema, various times & places, 0117 907 4190. www.cbcinema.com

CYRK
A mixed bill of extreme performance and improvisation with Justice Yeldian, SKADA, featuring Ntini & Eddie Privat, Ugarbale, guncomputer.org/110, mumur, plus guest DJs Che Graham, Paddy Collins and Richard Thomas. London Barbers Bar, 11 November, 7.30pm-late, £3, 07767 428415

FREE RADICALS
Improvisation nights with Roland Romanus Quartet, Dominic Lash, Roberto & Stacey (2 November) and The Residents with special guests David Loeb and Rhonda Davies (8). London Red Room Club, 8pm, £5/£3, 07783 387482, grand.berrymingal.com

INTUITIVE MUSIC EVENTS
These solo performances on string instruments: *Maurophone* from Canada, Colloble from USA and Jay Riley on guitar, cello, zhang and shamisen. Hall Adelphi Club, 6 November, 8pm, £2.50, 01482 348 216

KLINKER GILSTON
Improved music and off the wall performance club with film *Planet Rm* (11 November), The Jingles (4), Klinker Wing Group with Sisy! *Madbook* (book in advance on 020 8670 5204; 8.30pm start) (8); the Sky Charlton, a trumpet trio of Jim Devos, Frank Pearson and Paul Shearman (11); *Hypnotoad* and Simon Williams (15); Klinker Film Night with special guest (18) Hilary Jeffery & Alfredo Gerosoli (22); The Small Focuss featuring Robin Musgrave, Jerry Bird & Hugh Metcalfe, Companion Set, Harry Stacey & Archie Modes and Bob Flag (25); Hag Calling featuring Joe

Lynch, Sarah Moore, John Edwards, Steve Noble, David Jago and Adrian Northwell (29) London Sussex, Tuesdays and Fridays, 8pm, £5/£3, 020 8806 8216, www.klinkerclub.info

KLINKER NUHHEAD
Improved music and off the wall performance club with artists trio (3 November), Remote Views featuring David Potts, Adrian Northwell and Caroline Knevel, Superstrings featuring Kenna, Simon King, Chris Carretto, Paul May (10); Junk On Batman (17), the (24) London Hyde House, Thursdays, 8.30pm, £5/£3, 07971 499 090, www.klinkerclub.info

OXFORD IMPROVISERS
Improv and the dreaming spaces. Bruno Guastalla & Café Renzo (Oxford Port Mahon, 2 November), Pat Thomas/Alex Wood/Roger Turner (Oxford Bookers University Headquaters Hill Drama Studio, 6); Oxford Improvisers Orchestra present *Acouson* by Malcolm Adams (Oxford Acouson, 16) www.oxfordimprovisers.org.uk

RATIONAL RECORDS
New monthly Internet social occasion. Tonight features Andrew Sparling presenting three new works for diatonic and electronic, laptop music club *Butterfly*, and the opportunity to perform karaoke versions of songs by Nina Hagen, Karl Wili, Laurie Anderson or Nine Inch Nails. London Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, 1 November and every first Tuesday of the month, 7pm, £5, 07855 486311, www.rationalrecords.org.uk

SPRIT OF GRAVITY
Live electronic and experimental music from Capstick, Malachuk and Adrian. Brighton Marlborough Theatre, 22 November, 8.30pm, £4/£3, 07872 278 521, www.spiritofgravity.co.uk

SPRAWL
Sonic buffet of live performances of electronic music features binocular art and Hawaiian guitarists: Mike Cooper; analogue synth music from Slovenia's David, Sawa; electronic music from AM/PWR; and DJ Jonathan from Soul Jazz.

London Charterhouse Bar Upstairs, 9 November, 7.30pm; £4/£3, 020 7808 0858, www.sprawl.org.uk

WACK: A FETE WORSE THAN DEAD
"Composion of comedy and electronic music" featuring Steve Strider, Simon Murrey, Adverse Gernber's Interactive Sausage Salam and the Wack D Assault Squad. London Spitz, 4 November, 8pm-late, 020 7392 9032, www.wack-1.com

Incoming

MEM

SPAIN

Annual festival in the Basque country including dance, theatre, environmental art, video, film, net art, performance, readings and masterclasses. Artists include David Thomas & Two Pale Boys, RE-MAIL, Fred Bago & Carbone Show and Le Derrier Co. Bilbao various venues, times and prices, 12-30 December, 09 650 939 676, www.musculomachina.com

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

UK
All Tomorrow's Parties winter event with a line-up selected by Man With Aps includes Lydia Lunch, Antony And The Johnsons, Acid Mothers Temple, Dismembered Gates, Cinematic Orchestra, Dermo Suzuki & Jeff Planet, High On Fire, Coco Rose, Beans, Holger Czukay, The Hills, Blonde Redhead, Jaga Jaga, Ward, We, The Faching Champs, Les Sex Fins, Michael Rohrer, Battles, Quintron & Miss Rousset, The Locust, New Future, 400 Blows, Subtron, The Hills, Les Sex Fins, Holl, One Gas, Jax-Alia Sawant, The Eternals, Dugan, Saul Williams, Roger Vargas, Derek, Maatsober and Hill Me Tomorrow, Combo Bands Holiday Camp, 2-4 December, www.atptfestival.com

Out There items for inclusion in the December issue should reach us by Friday 21 October

UK Radio

RESONANCE 104.4 FM

NR Resonance has undergone major restructuring as of October 2005. The station broadcasts across Central London from 8am, seven days a week with repeat broadcast outside these times. CD-quality live streaming and full listings at www.resonancefm.com

ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC
Thursday 9.30pm. Presented by The Wire staff

BALLING THE JACK
Tuesday 12 noon. Blues with Joe Coughlin

BERMUDA TRIANGLE
Thursday midnight. Presented by Howard Jacques

BLACK FRIDAY
Friday 10.30pm. Death Metal

CLEAR SPOT
Weekdays 7pm. Open access slot

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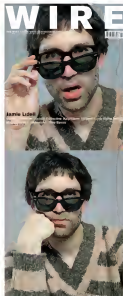
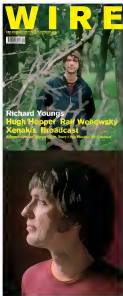
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[illegible]



Koto virtuoso, Keiko Nosaka

David Toop finds new ways of listening in the silences of shakuhachi master Watazumi, composer Minoru Miki and koto player Keiko Nosaka

In September I lectured in Daejeon, at KAIST, the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology. During questions after my talk, I spoke a little about my passion for Korean traditional music, notably *saengbop*, *jeonggups*, *pansori* opera, Buddhist *pompae* chanting, *hyangak* court music and Confucian *aak*. One of the institute's lecturers challenged me. At first she assumed that I had discovered this music during my trip and so was expressing the innocent enthusiasm of a sonophagic tourist. I explained that I had been listening to Korean recordings and attending concerts for more than 35 years, and what I continue to find endlessly stimulating is the strongest timbres (an audio equivalent of the pungent, spicy kimchee served at every Korean meal), tempi that teeter on the brink of immobility, volatile improvising, and what John Cage called "Korean time", a mixture of precise, concussive simultaneous hits, or stungled, fractionally delayed accents spread across ensembles of wind, percussion and string. It's hard to think of any other body of music in which silences gather energy in the same way, as if the momentum of playing is driven by withholding, rather than pushing outwards.

We discussed these silences/not-silences a bit, but what I couldn't do, she concluded (couldn't in the sense of not being in a position to do so, rather than shouldn't), was criticise Korean traditional music for its suspension in a period of pre-modern history. For her, this was an art form that had failed to adapt to contemporary conditions and so exists only as a museum piece. Given the turbulent, repressed history of Korea in the 20th century, this seems hardly surprising. Traditional music had little opportunity to evolve under Japanese colonial occupation, followed by civil war and military dictatorship.

I might agree with her, but the awareness of this alleged fossilisation affects me in a relatively dispassionate form, since I began listening to records, initially those released by the late, great recordist John Levy, rather than growing up with some sense that the music was part of my immediate cultural legacy. For me, there was no unpleasant weight of history, no aura of old people and defunct institutions, no unwelcome associations with an imposed exoticism.

Despite the vigorous modernising efforts of composer-performers such as Hwang Byung-ki and Jin Hi Kim, or Kim Duk-Soo's shamanistic fusions, along with the inevitable splash of "Greensleeves" interpreted on the *kyangju*, traditional repertoire apparently has little to do with South Korea's ascendancy in the field of edge technologies, IT infrastructure and violent revenge movies.

Or does it? This is a phenomenon that fascinates outsiders – a country in which it's possible to buy 16 gigabyte flash memory, then go and eat *tofu-like* *makjelly* blocks made from acorns – but it also raises the contradiction between adhering to modernist ideals of change yet retaining deeply inspirational feelings for frozen traditions. Musicians who pass under the radar of the academy, and I would guess this is true of younger Korean players such as percussionist Park Je Chul, may be finding new ways to approach dilemmas of identity and practice, having found themselves isolated from both the international so-called community and the mainstream cultural life of their own country.

The discussion at KAIST made me think again about conservatism. This is an aspect of music making that few people wish to discuss. Conservatism is either good or bad, and that's it; for neo-conservative music critics, conservatism is the future, for experimentalists and *flax* rebels, it's in the past. If I'm listening for more than 35 years to music that developed within the court of a Korean king in the 12th century, then conservatism seems an inadequate word to describe the ossification of that experience. On the other hand, the music springs out at me like a series of controlled explosions. Nothing is familiar, except in my elusive memories of the sound. After all this time, in the hearing, I still make discoveries.

At around the same time I encountered Korean music. In the early 1970s, I was given a cassette tape by a Japanese artist named Toshio Sekiguchi. On one side of the tape was music by the *shakuhachi* player Watazumi; on the other side was a collection of pieces for 20 string koto, composed by Minoru Miki and performed with breathtaking virtuosity and subtlety by Keiko Nosaka. Perhaps it's too strong to describe

this moment as an epiphany, but I was affected profoundly. The articulation of silence was revelatory, particularly in Watazumi's slow pieces and in Miki's *Tenryo*, but maybe what pulled me up even more sharply was a realisation that experimentation existed outside of the avant garde.

On the surface, perhaps this wasn't so different from the approach of British experimental composers such as Howard Skempton, Ivan Hume-Carter, Michael Parsons, Gavin Bryars and Cornelius Cardew. Once the post-Cage, post-Fuxus air had cleared, all of them, in very different ways, were looking for meaningful ways to engage with tonality, which is another way of saying that they were looking for meaningful ways to engage with a particular history.

The difference lay in the origins of this strategy. For the British experimental music composers (and Christian Wolff in the US), their encounters with tonality and tradition were determined by a desire to communicate beyond the limited possibilities of the avant garde context. For Minoru Miki the desire to communicate seems to have been conditioned by a rejection of modernism, a more direct desire for simplicity. Koto pieces such as *A Young Sprout* and *Hanyagi* by Miki are disarmingly lyrical, though heard in the context of Nagisa Oshima's *Empire Of The Senses*, with its graphic sex, cruelty and violence, their attractiveness emphasises the film's themes of desire and possession and so adds another layer to this difficult issue of memory, history, conservatism and progression.

What I question now is not so much whether it's decadent, reactionary or critically indulgent to be listening to Minoru Miki's rather pretty koto pieces, or 12th century Confucian music from Korea, but why music in general has become quite boring. The institution of music – all music – is more conservative than any individual examples. Hearing sound, or finding new contexts in which to play music, is what seems more interesting than any argument about certain music being right or wrong, conservative or progressive. I don't have a theory to resolve any of these thoughts; simply the desire to maintain an open way of listening. □

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